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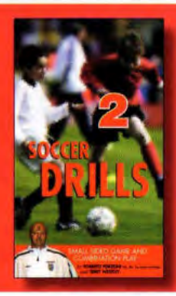

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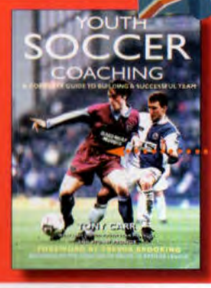

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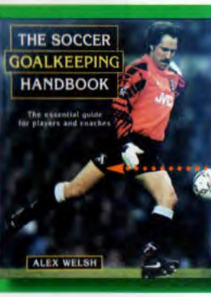

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July 2003

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IS THERE anything more depressing than the realisation that the sport you love is now run and controlled by accountants? But whether we like it or not, the financial well-being of football – and particularly its biggest clubs – is an issue that needs to be addressed. Our report on the world's richest clubs, starting on page 18, is an attempt to do just that.

Previous reports published elsewhere have applied accounting principles to analyse club finances. But they ignored the fact that football clubs are not businesses in the normal sense; they are sporting institutions and deserve to be viewed differently. So we have used journalistic principles to assess which clubs have the most 'spending power' in terms of buying players and paying their wages.

The results, particularly of the top-placed club, should surprise nobody. But I would hope that our findings will provoke discussion on two levels in particular. Firstly, is it right that a tiny number of clubs can exercise such a stranglehold on the game through their financial power? Secondly, what if anything can be done about the situation?

Although the European season is over – La Liga's climax apart – we're still in for a busy summer thanks to those considerate people at FIFA House. The 2003 Confederations Cup takes place in France in the last two weeks in June. Despite the tournament's obvious faults, we have a duty to preview it (starting on page 28) and, next month, review it in full.

Gavin Hamilton, Editor (gavin_hamilton@ipcmedia.com)

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2003 CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FINAL

Milan hold their nerve

Paolo Maldini emulates 'Papa Cesare' as the *rossoneri* win their sixth European Cup. Keir Radnedge reports from Old Trafford, Manchester

IN THE END, after 120 minutes and a penalty shoot-out, the 2003 Champions League Final was decided by nerve. Milan, anchored by experience of the occasion, held theirs; but Juventus, five of whose multi-millionaires refused to take a spot-kick, lost theirs, and with it the first all-Italian Final.

Milan captain Paolo Maldini thus followed in his father's footsteps by raising the trophy in England: 40 years before 'Papa Cesare's' son lifted the Champions Cup at Old Trafford, he had done the same thing at Wembley. That had been Milan's first of what are now six Final victories – only nine-times champions Real Madrid have won more.

Maldini junior has been a winner four times in six Finals, edging him closer to Francisco Gento's six wins in eight Finals for Madrid in the 1950s and 1960s, and within one victory of two other Madrid legends, Alfredo Di Stefano and Jose Maria Zarraga.

Seedorf's place in history

A unique place in European football history was also secured by Clarence Seedorf, the first man to win the most prestigious club prize with three clubs: Ajax in 1995, Madrid in 1998 and now Milan. The Dutchman was one of the outstanding individuals and, while he missed one of the penalties, it proved merely academic.

As Milan yet again revealed themselves as a club inspired by the competition, Juventus were exposed once more as its jinx team. Never mind a record 27 Italian League titles – including the latest – Juventus have won the Champions Cup just twice.

After the game, Milan coach Carlo Ancelotti, sacked two years ago by Juve so they could bring back Marcello Lippi, wallowed in happy platitudes. Ancelotti is the fourth man to win the Champions Cup as both player and coach after Miguel Munoz (Real Madrid), Giovanni Trapattoni (Milan then Juventus) and Johan Cruyff (Ajax then Barcelona).

He joined that pantheon with some relief after a season in which he has not always been at one with owner/Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi over tactics and selection. The Old Trafford message was unspoken but clear: Berlusconi should get on with running the country; Milan's football is in safe hands.

It was Ancelotti's insight into the Juventus psyche that was to prove invaluable in Manchester. The coach sent out Milan to seize the initiative from the start, and while they failed to score, they took Juve's legs, so that, even when Milan had been reduced to 10 effective men in extra-time with Roque Junior a passenger, their opponents could not capitalise.

Juventus badly missed suspended Czech playmaker Pavel Nedved, while Milan had everyone they wanted available after veteran defender 'Billy' Costacurta passed a late fitness test.

The cynics had feared the pressure of prestige would wreck the Final as a spectacle, but those fears proved unfounded, largely because both teams opted for a back four rather than *catenaccio*. But, further forward, Milan were the more inventive. Gennaro Gattuso and Andrea Pirlo sat close to the central defenders – thus closing down Juve's disappointing David Trezeguet – with Manuel Rui Costa and Seedorf wider and further forward.

Andrii Shevchenko, rather than playing wide right as expected, partnered Pippo Inzaghi in the centre of attack and caused Juventus discomfort. The Ukrainian was, for me, man of the match, showing pace, great commitment and then scoring the clinching penalty.

Juventus offered no such surprises. They spread a four-man net across midfield and relied on wide men Mauro Camoranesi (in vain) and Gianluca Zambrotta (with due reward) to undertake the hardest work of covering in defence then sparking counter-attacks. Zambrotta won a number of free-kicks from which Alex Del Piero threatened Milan. But Juve's set-up meant the forceful Edgar Davids had to attack from too deep and the effort ultimately cost him an early exit through injury.

'Cynics had feared the pressure of prestige would wreck the Final as a spectacle, but those fears proved largely unfounded'

Nedved's absence offered an opportunity for Del Piero to underline the quality that once earned him labels as the 'new Rivera' or the 'new Baggio'. He has scored 100 goals in almost 250 League games for Juventus in his 10 seasons, and in that time he has won five Italian championships, one Italian Cup, one European Supercup, one World Club Cup and the Champions League in 1996. But the outside world had never seen him at his consistently dominating best. Del Piero played well enough at Old Trafford but his shooting was poor. Maybe Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson was correct in his analysis that "most players recover well from cruciate injuries, but I am not sure he has; I don't think he has the same pace as four or five years ago, though he still has great balance and skill."

Pace was the early key for Milan, notably through Seedorf and Shevchenko. In the ninth minute they thought they had their reward. Inzaghi crossed from the left and Shevchenko fired low past Juve's outstanding keeper Gianluigi Buffon. Unfortunately, Rui Costa's supporting run had taken him directly in front of the keeper into an offside position. German referee Markus Merk correctly disallowed the 'goal'.

Chances missed

Three minutes later Shevchenko's pace again surprised Juventus, but this time Ciro Ferrara made a wonderful clearing tackle. Five more minutes and Seedorf crossed from the right, Inzaghi shot and Buffon saved superbly, one-handed, for a corner.

Juventus created far fewer openings. Trezeguet put a 'free' header wide in the 10th minute, Del Piero curled a shot high over the bar on 28 and then forced keeper Dida to save for a corner on 41.

Juventus made a tactical switch at half-time by replacing Camoranesi with Antonio Conte. The veteran substitute very nearly made a decisive impact within a minute, heading against the Milan bar from Del Piero's cross. At the other end, Maldini, diving, headed wide a right-wing free-kick by Pirlo. That was around the hour mark and was the last significant chance as both teams shut down the game and shadow-boxed their way through silver-goal extra-time to penalties.

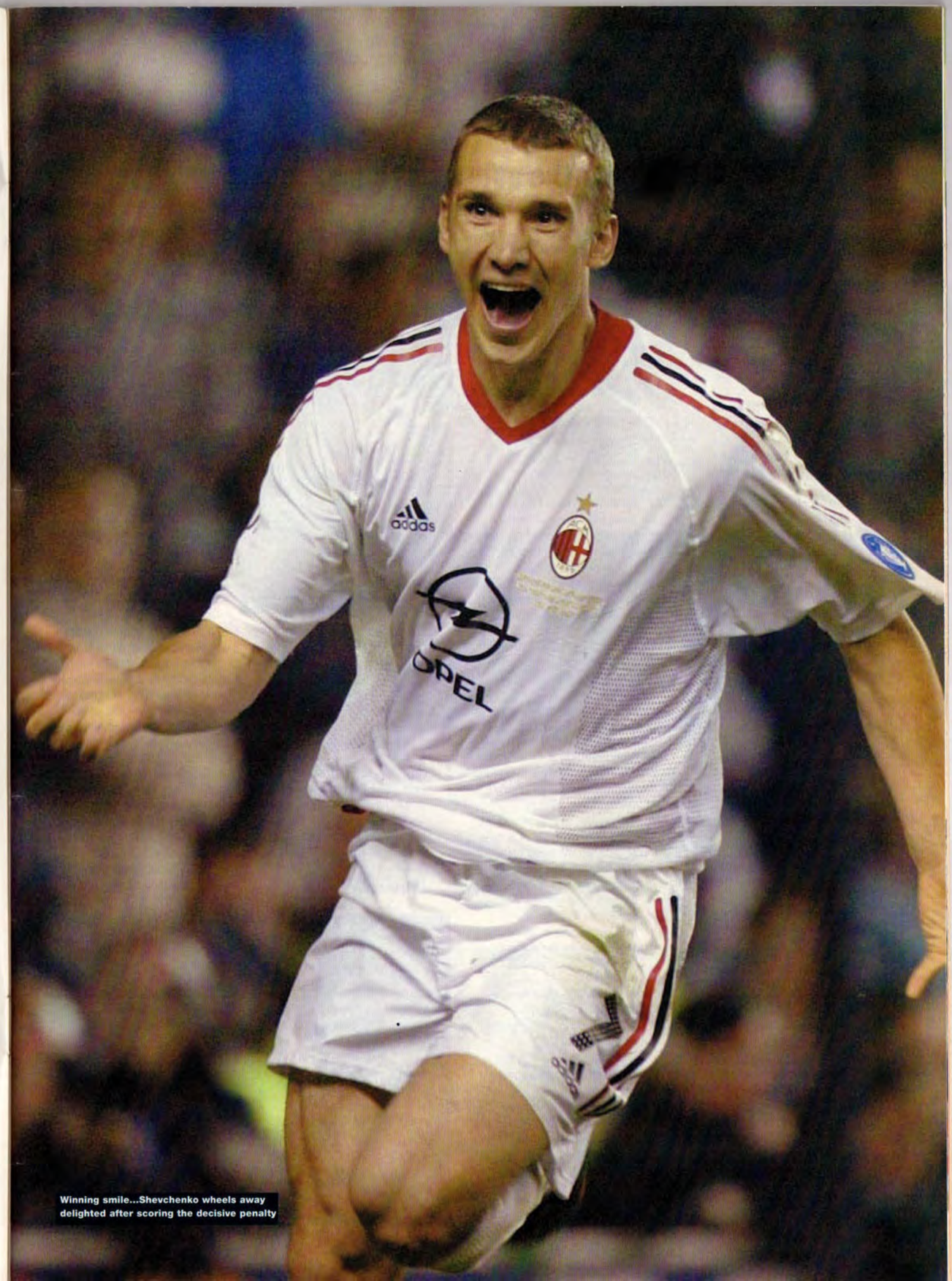
Buffon's superiority to the ragged Dida should have given Juventus an edge. Unfortunately, Juve first had problems finding enough players to take penalties, and then Trezeguet, Marcelo Zalayeta and Paolo Montero all provided the Brazilian keeper with diffident assistance.

Lippi was probably not surprised. He said later: "Everything went wrong for us, starting with the suspension, then the injuries and the penalties. When four or five players refuse to take a penalty, it's difficult. You can't force someone.

"This was the third Final we have lost in six years. We were so tired and had insufficient fuel in the tank to take the chances which came our way.

"I don't think this means Milan are a better team than us, just that they were better today. We have just won the Italian championship again, and over the past two seasons we have been 27 points better than them. So I think that speaks for itself."

In football mathematics, maybe. But not in football legend.



Winning smile...Shevchenko wheels away delighted after scoring the decisive penalty

MINUTE BY MINUTE – the action as it happened

3rd min
Montero concedes the first corner of the match, beating Shevchenko to the ball to head behind.

9 From Inzaghi's cross, Shevchenko shoots past Buffon, but Rui Costa is judged to be in an offside position and standing in front of the keeper. Goal disallowed.

10 Trezeguet, under pressure from Nesta, heads Thuram's cross wide.

12 A brilliant tackle by Ferrara denies Shevchenko after the Ukrainian had chested the ball past Montero on the right-hand touchline.

Substituted...Davids

13 Shevchenko, an increasing threat on the right flank, is clattered by Montero.

14 Zambrotta wins free-kick at the other end after a foul by Rui Costa.

15 Del Piero's inswinging free-kick is not cleared, but Montero is penalised for pushing.

16 Ferrara turns Gattuso's cross behind. Pirlo's corner is cleared by Thuram.

17 Seedorf crosses for Inzaghi, whose diving header forces a brilliant save from Buffon.

18 Juve clear the corner and break through Zambrotta, who is fouled by Costacurta.
BOOKING for Costacurta.

19 Del Piero's free-kick is headed away by Seedorf and falls to Thuram, who shoots high and wide.

25 Milan force another corner, which is cleared by Ferrara.

28 Del Piero tries a curling shot from the edge of the area, but it goes wide.

30 Davids follows through with a tough challenge on Pirlo, but is allowed to continue, feeding Trezeguet, who is foiled by Nesta.

31 Shevchenko beats Camoranesi on the left, but his cross from the byline is too high for Inzaghi.

34 Zambrotta is fouled again on Juve's left flank, this time by Seedorf. Del Piero curls in another free-kick but Trezeguet is penalised for pushing.

38 Shevchenko plays through Rui Costa, but his promising run ends in a cross cut out by Buffon.

39 Rui Costa beats Tacchinardi on the edge of the Juve penalty area, but then shoots wide.

41 Tudor turns his ankle in a challenge with Shevchenko and limps off.

42 SUBSTITUTION Birindelli for Tudor. Birindelli goes to left-back with Montero moving inside to centre-back.

43 Del Piero, played in by Camoranesi, gets in behind the Milan defence; his shot is spilled by Dida for Juve's first corner.

44 Juve force another corner. Nesta brilliantly blocks Del Piero, the ball falls to Zambrotta, who completely fluffs his shot.

45 Rui Costa's cross is cut out by Montero. From the corner, Gattuso's shot is held by Buffon.

Stoppage time
A swift move upfield involving Rui Costa, Shevchenko and Seedorf ends in a cross that is too high for Inzaghi.
Milan are on top as the half closes, with Kaladze's shot well held by Buffon.

46 SUBSTITUTION Conte for Camoranesi. Second half kicks off. Zambrotta switches to right midfield and wins a corner.

47 Del Piero's cross headed behind for another corner. Another Del Piero delivery, this time Conte hits the bar with a diving header.

Repelled...Dida saves Zalayeta's penalty

The ball spins across goal and is cleared for another corner.

48 Inzaghi heads Rui Costa's cross wide.

60 Maldini, despite attempts by Tacchinardi to pull his shirt off, heads Pirlo's cross wide.

65 Shevchenko and Seedorf break forward but the Dutchman plays a weak cross into the box, looking for Inzaghi, when he should have cut the ball back for Shevchenko.
SUBSTITUTION Zalayeta for Davids. Del Piero drops deeper as Zalayeta joins Trezeguet in attack.

66 SUBSTITUTION Roque Junior for Costacurta. Straight swap at right-back.

67 Zalayeta wins a free-kick, taken by Del Piero, and then heads wide.

69 BOOKING Tacchinardi for trip on Pirlo.

71 SUBSTITUTION Serginho for Pirlo. Serginho goes to the left flank, with Seedorf taking a more central role.

72 A Serginho shot is caught by Buffon.

73 Conte controls a long forward pass in mid-air with an acrobatic leap, but then blasts over the bar.

Final words...Milan coach Ancelotti (centre) prepares his players for the shoot-out

76 Inzaghi heads Serginho's cross wide.

77 Inzaghi chests and turns in the area, but his shot deflects off Tacchinardi and away.

79 Roque Junior's cross is deflected behind by Birindelli. Corner cleared by Thuram.

86 Serginho's cross is just too high for Inzaghi.

87 SUBSTITUTION Ambrosini for Rui Costa.

89 Nesta, galloping forward, is clipped by Conte. Seedorf puts the free-kick way too deep.

90 Seedorf's free-kick sails high and wide.

End of normal time

Extra-time

93 Roque Junior's slip lets in Birindelli on the left, but his cross is headed wide by Zalayeta.

95 Roque Junior appears unable to carry on having pulled his hamstring in a challenge with Birindelli.

100 Conte shoots over.

103 Maldini heads a corner over the bar.

108 Serginho's run takes him into the area, but his cross is hit too long.

111 Shevchenko is ruled offside when played through by Seedorf.
BOOKING Del Piero for trip on Gattuso.

117 Del Piero blasts over after Nesta's headed clearance of a corner.

120 Trezeguet heads away Milan's 13th corner and referee Merk blows for full-time.

Penalties
Trezeguet: weak shot, easily pushed away by Dida. 0-0.
Serginho: confident shot to left, Buffon to right. 0-1.
Birindelli: strikes shot to his left, Dida goes other way. 1-1.
Seedorf: shoots to left, pushed away brilliantly by Buffon. 1-1.
Zalayeta: hits shot down middle, saved by Dida. 1-1.
Kaladze: shoots straight at Buffon. 1-1.
Montero: casual run-up, weak shot straight at Dida. 1-1.
Nesta: sharp shot to right of Buffon. 1-2.
Del Piero: rolls ball to right, Dida goes left. 2-2.
Shevchenko: strong, confident shot to his right, Buffon dives to left. 2-3.

PLAYER BY PLAYER

JUVENTUS

Gianluigi Buffon
Pulled off an outstanding save from Inzaghi in the first half and Seedorf in the shoot-out, but it was not enough.

Lilian Thuram
Another excellent performance at right-back. Authoritative and commanding. World class.

Ciro Ferrara
First-rate performance from a centre-back whose pace and ageing legs had been questioned by some.

Paolo Montero
Typically robust performance from the Uruguayan centre-back, who started the game at left-back.

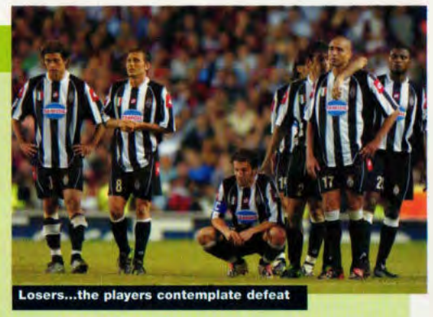
Igor Tudor
Substituted before half-time after twisting an ankle.

Mauro Camoranesi
Replaced by Conte at half-time after failing to live up to his promising performances earlier in the season.

Edgar Davids
Solid but not spectacular display. Replaced by Zalayeta.

Alessio Tacchinardi
Dug deep in midfield alongside Davids and Conte.

Gianluca Zambrotta
Excelled on the left flank in the first half before moving to the right.


Losers...the players contemplate defeat

Alessandro Del Piero
Overall, a disappointing display from the player who was expected to shine.

David Trezeguet
Not one of the French international's best performances, but he did not receive decent service.

SUBS
Alessandro Birindelli: filled in well at left-back following Tudor's injury.
Antonio Conte: veteran had a big impact in the second half, but tired.
Marcelo Zalayeta: gave Juve's attack another dimension but crowded out by Milan's defence.

MILAN

Dida
Made crucial saves in the shoot-out, although he moved way before the penalties were taken.

Winners...trophy time

Alessandro Costacurta
Passed a late fitness test, but forced off early through injury.

Paolo Maldini
A supreme performance by the captain, who won his fourth European Cup medal and emulated the achievement of his father Cesare, Milan captain at Wembley in 1963.

Alessandro Nesta
Equally brilliant alongside Maldini; a truly commanding presence.

Kakha Kaladze
Showed only glimpses of attacking ambition, but solid nonetheless.

Andrea Pirlo
Clever play in midfield created space for Seedorf and Shevchenko to attack; gave way to Serginho in the second half.

Clarence Seedorf
A record-breaking performance, becoming the first man to win the European Cup with three different clubs. Full of intelligent play, but missed a penalty.

Gennaro Gattuso
Tigerish display in midfield; kept running to the very end.

Rui Costa
Played his part to the full in Milan's exciting football of the first hour. Withdrawn shortly before the end of normal time as Milan battened down the hatches.

Andrii Shevchenko
Outstanding, man of the match. Troubled Juve with his pace and trickery early on, and held his nerve in the shoot-out.

Filippo Inzaghi
Well-marshalled by the Juve defenders, but drew one great save from Buffon.

SUBS
Roque Junior: a passenger during extra-time after damaging a hamstring.
Serginho: gave a new midfield edge, but not always effective.
Massimo Ambrosini: did a containing job well.

MATCH FACTS

May 28 - Old Trafford, Manchester
Juventus 0
Milan 0
Aet. **Att:** 63,215. **Ref:** Merk (Ger)
Milan 3-2 on pens

JUVENTUS
Buffon - Thuram, Tudor (Birindelli 42), Ferrara, Montero - Camoranesi (Conte 46), Tacchinardi, Davids (Zalayeta 65), Zambrotta - Trezeguet, Del Piero.
Subs not used: Chimenti, Pessotto, Iuliano, Di Vaio.
Booked: Tacchinardi, Del Piero.
Coach: Lippi.

MILAN
Dida - Costacurta (Roque Junior 66), Nesta, Maldini, Kaladze - Gattuso, Pirlo (Serginho 71) - Rui Costa (Ambrosini 87), Seedorf - Inzaghi, Shevchenko.
Subs not used: Abbiati, Rivaldo, Laursen, Brocchi.
Booked: Costacurta.
Coach: Ancelotti.

PENALTY SHOOT-OUT
(Juventus first): Trezeguet saved 0-0, Serginho 0-1; Birindelli 1-1, Seedorf saved 1-1; Zalayeta saved 1-1, Kaladze saved 1-1; Montero saved 1-1, Nesta 1-2; Del Piero 2-2, Shevchenko 2-3.

No points for losers

The progress of Milan and Juventus to this year's Final suggests rumours of the decline and fall of Italian football have been greatly exaggerated, argues Paddy Agnew in Rome

SO THEN, football, Italian-style, is bad for you? In the season that witnessed the first ever all-Italian Champions Cup Final, the question is worth asking.

As someone who has lived in Italy for the past 18 years, I have always been struck by the passionate commitment of the Italy-Bashers Club. For example, I well recall how on the eve of the Italy v Holland Euro 2000 semi-final, colleagues tried to impress upon me how "bad for football" it would be if Italy were to beat the Dutch. It would be a triumph for boring old negative *catenaccio* at the expense of positive Dutch total football, I was assured.

Italy's subsequent dourly defensive performance doubtless only confirmed the worst suspicions of the Italy-bashers. Never mind that Italy had played some excellent football on the way to that semi-final and never mind that Italy went on to largely outplay France in their last-gasp loss in the Final.

By the way, it is also worth asking just what precisely was "good for football" about the tactically inept, naively repetitive, head-down attacking game employed by the over-anxious Dutchmen that night. Was that not a game where a little sang-froid and a tactically balanced approach would have seen Holland into the Final? Are these not qualities fundamental to "good football"?

Recent seasons have offered the Italy-bashers plenty of good cheer. Three seasons of total whitewash in European club competitions, last year's ignominious World Cup exit at the hands of South Korea and a recent European Championship defeat by Wales have even led some (British and Spanish, but not only) commentators to predict the definitive decline and fall of Italian football.

Crisis, what crisis?

Over the past year, your correspondent has been interviewed on umpteen occasions about the "crisis" in Italian football. One has vainly tried to point out that whereas the word crisis might well be accurately used in relation to some aspects of Italian football – overall finances, TV rights, League structure, fan behaviour, etc – that term could hardly be extended to the entire football movement.

After all, results are results. Italian clubs have won five and played in 10 of the last 15 Champions Cup Finals, not to mention winning eight of the last 15 UEFA Cups. In the same period, Spanish clubs have won four and played in six Champions Cup Finals, without winning a single UEFA Cup.

More emphatic still is the miserable record of English Premiership clubs, admittedly undermined by the 1985-1990 'Heysel ban'. In the past 15 years, only one English club (Manchester United) has made the Champions League Final, winning it in 1999, while in the same period only one English club (Liverpool) has won the UEFA Cup (2001).

Clearly then, English football is in total crisis, is it? Indeed it may be, judging by Arsenal's failure to progress beyond the second group stage of this season's Champions League, not to mention the tactically inept performance of Manchester United against Real Madrid in the quarter-finals. Incidentally, even as celebrated a coach as Sir Alex Ferguson would have been 'roasted' by the Italian media for those performances.

While one can only stand back and admire the sporting behaviour of the Old Trafford fans who stood to applaud Ronaldo off the pitch following his hat-trick in the second leg of United's tie with Madrid, you have to wonder about the tactical awareness of those same fans if they felt that United's 'stand back and slug it out' approach was anything other than football suicide.

Here, too, it is worth making a small aside. It is true that the United fans showed genuine sportsmanship in applauding Ronaldo off the pitch. Such fan behaviour was not without precedent in this Champions League season, however. Your correspondent was at the Olympic stadium in Rome last autumn when Real Madrid humiliated Roma in an emphatic 3-0 drubbing that also prompted a standing ovation at the final whistle.

The belief that Italian football is based on a negative, cheating, percentage game is hard to eradicate from some minds. When Johan Cruyff suggested earlier this year that an all-Italian Champions League Final would be "bad for football" (that expression again), he was not only stating an honest belief but he was probably also speaking for many, fans and experts alike.

The great joy about the 'beautiful game' is that one man's 'negative football' can be another man's 'winning football'. One man who has never made any secret of his admiration for the Italian way is current Portugal coach Luiz Felipe Scolari, the Brazilian who led his native country to last summer's World Cup triumph in Japan and South Korea.

"People are always talking to me about entertainment, about spectacle, and that sort of thing. Well, let's get one thing clear – this game is about a struggle between two teams to get a result. In the end, what counts is which team wins," Scolari recently told *Gazzetta Dello Sport*. He added: "Football is not a circus where the winner is the side that pulls off more back-heels, more nutmegs and more dribbles. In football, you win by putting together a balanced team, one that knows how to attack and also knows how to defend.

"At the moment, there are no better teams in Europe than Milan and Juventus. Milan are better on the ball, perhaps have more technically refined players, but Juventus have more muscle and more willpower."

Italian football far from fallen

Perhaps the all-Italian Champions League Final at Old Trafford did nothing to convince the Italy-bashers to change their views, but it did at least prove one point. Like it or not, rumours of the decline and fall of Italian football have been greatly exaggerated.

'Italian clubs have won five and played in 10 of the last 15 Champions Cup Finals. Spanish clubs have won four and played in six'

Technique and willpower...Milan v Juventus

Lining up again...Italian clubs have a consistently good record of reaching Champions Cup Finals

The month in pictures

● 22/04/03...Barcelona fail to hold Juventus in the Champions League quarter-finals, losing 2-1 on the night and 3-2 on aggregate

● 22/04/03...Christian Vieri gives Inter the lead as they beat Valencia on away goals

● 23/04/03...Ajax are beaten by a last-minute Milan goal in their quarter-final

● 23/04/03...David Beckham scores for Man United, but Real Madrid win 6-5 on aggregate

● 24/04/03...Trevor Brooking takes over as caretaker manager of West Ham

● 24/04/03...Michael Ballack is omitted from Germany's squad

● 24/04/03...A Henrik Larsson goal against Boavista clinches Celtic's place in the UEFA Cup Final

Europe's most wanted

Nick Bidwell on the players who are likely to dominate the summer transfer market

BIG NAMES

Ruben Baraja
Valencia will talk business if Man United, Real Madrid or Barcelona make the right offer for the midfielder. Around £18million will do it.

Edmilson
Although a World Cup-winner with Brazil last year, the attack-minded centre-back has been unable to hold down a regular place at French League champions Lyon. A move to Spain is on the cards.

Patrick Kluivert
Should Barça give the ex-Ajax star the green light to leave, he could well end up in England. Despite a disappointing spell with Milan in 1997-98, Serie A clubs would also be interested.

Roy Makaay
After a prolific goalscoring season for Deportivo, he has countless admirers. Bayern Munich want him badly, but the upper echelons of the Premiership have more pull for the Dutchman.

Claude Makelele
While Real Madrid's French defensive midfielder recently denied he was interested in a move to Man United, rumours persist he may be part of the deal that takes Beckham to the Bernabeu. Inter are keen on him too.

Rafael Marquez
Debt-ridden Monaco cannot afford to retain the stylish Mexican central defender much longer. Real Madrid or Barcelona see him as the man to stiffen up their porous back-lines.

Alvaro Recoba
On his day the Uruguayan can win games single-handedly with his devastating left foot. But he seems to have burned his bridges with Internazionale following a series of anonymous springtime displays, especially in his club's Champions League semi-final loss to Milan.

Ronaldinho
Manchester United, Internazionale and Juventus dream of bringing in the delicate skills of the Brazilian midfielder. Cash-strapped Paris Saint-Germain want £37m; they may have to make do with less.

Bye-bye, Barça?...Patrick Kluivert

Roma tension...Totti

Rustu Recber
The Turkish keeper's days at Fenerbahce are said to be numbered. Barcelona and Arsenal lead the chasing pack.

Leaving Monaco...Rafael Marquez

Jaap Stam
Will have to be sold by Lazio to ease their debts. Juventus are favourites to land the Dutch stopper; Milan and old club PSV are watching closely.

Francesco Totti
It's always been assumed that he would remain at hometown club Roma for life. But Roma's failure to qualify for the Champions League may have prepared the ground for a sensational departure. Recently admitted he would like to play for Real Madrid.

Pierre Van Hooijdonk
Now 33, the Feyenoord striker is looking for one final challenge, not to mention one last big pay-day. The likes of Birmingham and Portsmouth would love to bring in his free-kick magic.

Sylvain Wiltord
With the multi-purpose French attacker turning down Arsenal's offer for a contract extension, it is said he would not say no to a move to Bayern Munich or a Spanish club involved in the Champions League.

Watched...Joaquin

YOUNG GUNS

Sylvain Armand
French Under-21 left-back whose good form for Nantes has placed him on many a foreign shopping list, including Bayern Munich's.

Fernando Cavenaghi
The highly-rated teenage River Plate marksman is tipped to go to Juventus, with the Chilean striker Marcelo Salas going in the opposite direction.

Felipe
Exciting young Brazilian striker with Flamengo who is being tracked by a string of top European clubs. Milan are the favourites to sign him.

Joaquin
Besides being linked with all the major clubs in Spain, the Betis right-winger has been attracting much attention from Serie A.

Philippe Mexes
Virtually every leading club in Europe has been linked with the excellent Auxerre central defender. A reported buy-out clause in his contract of just £2.2m makes him an even more attractive proposition.

Benoit Pedretti
The newly-capped Sochaux midfield all-rounder says he would rather go to a major French club than move abroad immediately. Marseille, PSG or Lyon will give him his wish.

David Pizarro
Udinese claim their exceptional Chilean playmaker is not for sale. Internazionale, Juventus and Real Madrid think otherwise.

Attractive...Mexes

Ricardo Quaresma
The Sporting Lisbon wing wizard has his pick of leading clubs. Manchester United, whose assistant coach Carlos Queiroz is Portuguese too, may have the edge.

In form...Trabelsi

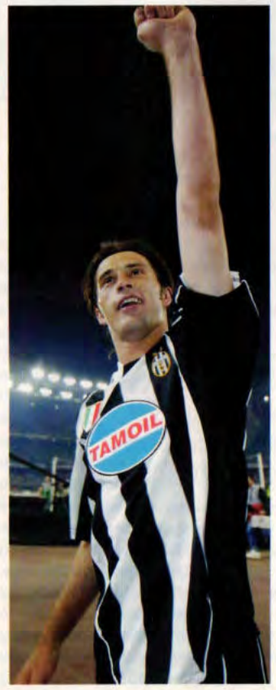
Hatem Trabelsi
Very impressive for Ajax this term, the Tunisian right-back has many a suitor in Italy and Spain.

Xabi Alonso
A key figure in Real Sociedad's magnificent season, the young midfield strategist has seen his value rocket in the past few months.

Hakan Yakin
The highly-skilled Swiss international knows the likes of Dortmund, Liverpool and Celtic are watching him.

WORLD SOCCER/CNN CLUB OF THE MONTH POLL

1 Juventus
2 Milan
3 FC Porto
4 Real Madrid
5 Manchester Utd
6 Real Sociedad
7 Boca Juniors
8 Bayern Munich
9 Santos
10 Internazionale



Notes & quotes

"Our football is in a permanent state of crisis."

Juan Jose Hidalgo, the vice-president of the Spanish League, bemoans total debts in his country's top flight of over £1billion.

Inter's Michael Owen...Obafemi Martins

"He's talented and spectacular. We have here a little Michael Owen."

Internazionale president Massimo Moratti on his club's teenage Nigerian striker Obafemi Martins.

"We play too much, we are at saturation point."

Ahead of the Confederations Cup, FIFA president Sepp Blatter says he wants domestic leagues cut to 16 or 18 teams.

"The work on the stadia for a World Cup finals has never been at such an advanced stage three years away from the kick-off."

German efficiency gets the thumbs-up from FIFA communications director Markus Siegler.

The month in pictures

● 24/04/03...Porto reach the UEFA Cup Final after drawing 0-0 with Lazio to win the semi-final 4-1 on aggregate

● 26/04/03...Bayern Munich celebrate winning the Bundesliga title after beating Wolfsburg 2-0

● 30/04/03...Thierry Henry scores for France in their 5-0 friendly victory over Egypt in Paris

● 02/05/03...Franz Beckenbauer joins the row over World Cup places

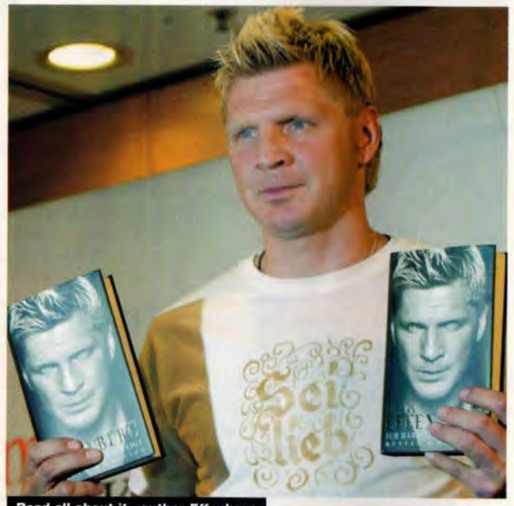
● 04/05/03...Bilbao stay in the hunt for a UEFA Cup place after beating Osasuna 5-1

● 06/05/03...Ronaldo celebrates scoring against Juventus in the Champions League semi-final first leg

● 07/05/03...Milan and Inter line up before the all-Italian semi-final

Keir Radnedge
MEDIAWATCH
News and views from the world's press

A few quiet words from Stefan...


Read all about it...author Effenberg

GERMANY: Stefan Effenberg has never been one for reticence. The first sentence of the introduction to his autobiography (ghosted by Jan Mendelin) says it all: "So you've bought my book? Great! You've got a classic in your hands."

The kiss-and-tell genre is old hat in British football. A fixture in the publishing landscape. The formula is simple. Player and ghost sit down with a tape recorder; agent sells book to publisher and juicy chapters to Sunday paper. One week it's big headlines, next week it's forgotten.

But it's very different in Germany, which is why Effenberg's *Ich Hab's Allen Gezeigt* (roughly 'Out in the Open') has made waves.

German sports books lean towards the technical, historical and statistical. And it's been 16 years, and Toni Schumacher's *Anpfiff*, since anything similar.

A second reason why 'Effe's' book made headlines was serialisation in the sensationalist *Bild*. A third was the content – which appeared to confirm the impression of ruthless arrogance that has marked Effenberg's career with Germany, Bayern Munich, Fiorentina and Borussia Monchengladbach.

He prides himself on never pulling punches, and pleads victimisation because of it. When Klaus Augenthaler, West Germany's World Cup-winning sweeper in 1990, returned to Bayern for the new season, he knew Stefan Reuter also coveted the role. Augenthaler was daft enough to seek the opinion of new boy Effenberg. "I think Reuter's better," he told Augenthaler. "It was clear we were not going to be the best of friends," writes Effenberg.

When Bayern lost out in the championship race to Kaiserslautern, president Franz Beckenbauer blamed the players. Effenberg thought Beckenbauer out of order – and said so in his newspaper column. He was duly sold to Fiorentina.

Brian Laudrup, also ex-Bayern, was there as well. But the two fell out when Effenberg borrowed Laudrup's car without permission.

He also did not agree with the way coach Gigi Radice shared out expensive wine to the players before a match; was not impressed when Radice was fired because his son was having an affair with a vice-president's wife; hated the sessions with fans; and was infuriated by relegation.

"I want a transfer," he told the club. "I am an international. My career is *kaputt* in the Second Division."

He agreed a move to Milan but Laudrup was transferred there instead. Effenberg had no option but to line up in Serie B under a new coach, Claudio Ranieri, whose training methods Effenberg dismissed as "comic". Soon Effenberg returned to Germany with Borussia Monchengladbach, before joining Bayern Munich.

> 'Effenberg's book has made waves. He prides himself on never pulling punches, and pleads victimisation because of it'

Various brushes with stalkers and the police pepper the story, which reaches a double nadir in both his public and private life.

The public scenario was played out in Bayern's Champions League Final defeat by Manchester United in Barcelona in 1999. Effenberg blames Lothar Matthaus – first Effe's hero, then dismissed as a 'loudmouth' – for losing his nerve and getting himself substituted. "Since he mostly played sweeper," says Effenberg, "it wasn't as if he had much running to do...he should just have gritted his teeth and played through any pain."

The private scenario was the breakdown of Effenberg's marriage to first wife Martina and involvement with Claudia, the wife of former Bayern team-mate Thomas Strunz. The liaison was complicated by the fact that Martina had also been Effenberg's personal manager and agent, and by Effenberg's decision to release several 'art' pictures of himself and Claudia – republished in *Bild*.

Amid all this generally unhappy experience, Effenberg's international career is almost forgotten. But, of course, the tale of the rude gesture to German fans in Dallas during the 1994 World Cup is recounted.

Effenberg gave 'the finger' to jeering German fans on being substituted during the 3-2 win over South Korea. Manager Berti Vogts said to him in the dressing-room: "Chin up, Stefan, it'll all be different in the next game." But the next game, which Vogts had promised, never came.

Vogts' next conversation with Effenberg was somewhat different – and Effenberg paid out of his own pocket for his flight ticket off on holiday.

Never one for a quiet exit, Stefan Effenberg.

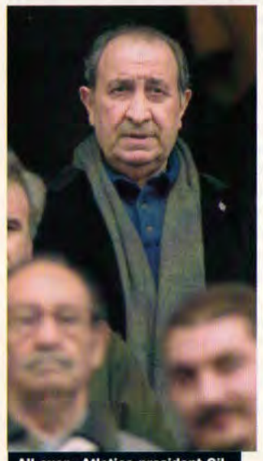
Jesus Gil: going but not forgotten

SPAIN: "Jesus Gil has thrown in the towel. He says he is fed up with a lack of respect and putting money into Atletico Madrid, and he does not want to stay on as president a minute longer than necessary.

"You can accuse Gil of having taken Atletico down into the Second Division (and back up) and of having sparked countless controversies, any one of which would have finished any other man.

"Not him, of course. Gil's stubbornness and indisputable dedication to his club have enabled him to withstand all manner of crises over his 16 years in charge.

"Yet perhaps his biggest mistake is to assume now that his departure will resolve the club's financial problems."
– *Miguel Angel Garcia-Juez in* Marca *on the end of an era on the south-west side of Madrid.*


All over...Atletico president Gil

Two worlds collide...Mandela 'gets to meet' England captain Beckham

Effenberg Part Two: Euro exit

BELGIUM: "Stefan Effenberg, having turned down offers from Wolfsburg, Tottenham, Fulham, Manchester City, Galatasaray, Besiktas and Austria Vienna has, instead, answered the call of Al Arabi of Qatar.

"Effenberg said he could refuse absolutely anything except for two million euros."
– *from Nicolas Ribaudo's 'Sept Jours' column in* Foot-Magazine.

History lesson

BRAZIL: "May 26, 1940: A new season of the Sao Paulo League starts with one significant change: from now on all matches will be split into two halves of 45 minutes each, as they are all over the world.

"Until now a timekeeper would tell the referee when the game was over."
– *fascinating glimpse into Brazilian domestic football – and not so very far back, either – from* Futbol Sudamericana al Dia.

Beckham, the saint

ENGLAND: "The martyr of conscience met the fashion victim, the grizzled statue shook hands with the gilded totem pole, the man with the scars chatted to the man with the tattoos. Perhaps his visitor's hair looked to Mandela like a blond version of the barbed wire that once stretched around his prison."
– *from two full broadsheet pages in* The Observer *in which Peter Conrad gets Beckham totally out of perspective.*

Beckham, the footballer

ENGLAND: "Are our powers of discrimination so ravaged by contemporary values that we are ready to accept as balancing presences in the same sentences a great liberator-hero of the 20th century and a footballer who has substantial talent but whose supreme distinction is his marketability? All men are created equal, but all icons are not."
– *from three paragraphs in* The Sunday Times *in which Hugh McIlvanney gets England's captain in perspective.*

Notes & quotes

"I didn't recognise my team-mates in the second leg against Juventus."

Injured Real Madrid midfielder Claude Makelele analyses his team's Champions League semi-final loss.

Unruffled...Bielsa

"The president only meant that if I should leave my post, he might turn to Bilardo. I'm staying put to lead Argentina to the 2006 World Cup."

Argentina boss Marcelo Bielsa responds to comments from federation chief Julio Grondona that former World Cup-winning coach Carlos Bilardo could be brought back.

"Platini would not make a good FIFA president. He has never said a word in favour of players."

Diego Maradona continues to attack football's authority figures.

"Maybe I'm too nostalgic. But I think our teams need more home-grown players, those who can identify with their clubs."

Schalke keeper Frank Rost hits out against the Bundesliga's foreign legion.

The month in pictures

● 07/05/03...Luis Aragones announces his intention to step down at Atletico Madrid

● 11/05/03...Brazilian Ronaldinho hints at a summer exit from Paris Saint-Germain

● 12/05/03...David Seaman is dropped by England coach Sven Goran Eriksson

● 13/05/03...Andrii Shevchenko scores the decisive goal in the second leg of the all-Milanese Champions League semi-final

● 14/05/03...David Trezeguet scores the first Juventus goal in their 3-1 defeat of Real Madrid in the Champions League semis

● 16/05/03...Bayern Munich insist goalkeeper Oliver Kahn is not for sale

● 17/05/03...Arsenal gain some consolation for losing the League title to Manchester United when they beat Southampton 1-0 in the FA Cup Final

GLOBAL VIEW

Paul Gardner

Coachus modernus: a dangerous breed

THE modern coach, it is now painfully clear, is not just a coach. Forget all that stone-age tracksuit stuff. Those days, the days of *Coachus paleolithicus*, are fading rapidly.

Coachus modernus has arrived. He comes with a badge or a licence or a diploma, maybe all three. Heavens, he's almost an academic. Knowing about football, both the practice and the theory, is just one of his achievements. Now he's been trained to deal – expertly – with club management, financial matters, man management, first aid, player psychology, referees, press relations.

Sven Goran Eriksson approves of the transformation, saying: "In football today, we know everything about the physical side, everything about tactics, everything about technique, so it is up to us to find other things. The mental approach is one of them. In this area, we have just started to smell it. In football, we are behind other sports like tennis, golf, athletics. I have used psychology. I have learnt things about myself. Where my own off-button is."

These are the guys, the ones who've located their off-buttons, who are the 21st century experts, the new gurus. There's no escaping either them or their opinions. So we dutifully listen and read. And what we get is pretty poor stuff. To be reasonable, it's obviously asking too much to expect that every coaching utterance be a shining jewel of wisdom. So I'll settle for just plain common sense.

If only. Far too frequently it is just plain trite. This sort of thing: "They're well-organised, strong-willed and a strongly motivated side that plays very well together." Who said that? Actually, a famous national team coach. But does it matter who said it? You can hear it, or a version of it, every week.

Blue-chip banality. Boring, but pretty harmless. Much more objectionable are the coaches who knowingly launch frontal assaults on soccer sanity. They do it, I think, because they feel pressure, in their guru role, to come up with something new, something different, something that no one else has thought of, or noticed.

Exhibit 1: "Personally, I've never liked goalscorers." The words of Arsene Wenger. Wenger means to say that he wants his (winning, of course) team not to have any standout individuals.

Everyone can score. Plus, things are so much easier for the coach without those temperamental superstars. A point of view from the heart of *Coachus modernus*, a view that – should it ever be widely applied – would strip the game of most of its liveliest players. Wenger may not like goalscorers, but there is a whole stack of evidence to say the fans love 'em.

Exhibit 2: Those of us who recently feasted greedily on the footballing banquet laid on by Real Madrid and Manchester United may now consider ourselves duly admonished for our ignorance. Take your eyes off Zinedine Zidane, will you...because "For all the Luis Figos, Ronaldos, Beckhams and Giggses, it was the difference between the two keepers which was most marked for me."

It was Iker Casillas and Fabien Barthez whom we should have been studying. So thinks John Toshack – who once coached Real Madrid. Does Toshack really believe that, even when football at its most sublime and exciting is on display, it's the goalkeepers who should command our attention?

Is this just another – albeit spectacularly silly – example of a coach who feels obligated to justify his guru role by coming up with something arcane? That's a pretty familiar routine. Asked to name the player of the game, a coach will tell you: "Oh, number 6, definitely." You struggle to remember anything at all about number 6. You don't admit that you barely noticed him, of course, that would prove your ignorance. So number 6 it is.

Euro 96 was a pretty good example of that sort of thing. We had Terry Venables promoting Steve Stone as the next great thing for England, while Roy Hodgson made Germany's Dieter Eilts his player of the tournament. Admittedly, Euro 96 was not distinguished by glittering individual performances...but Stone and Eilts? Please!

> **'Coaches feel pressure, in their guru role, to come up with something different, that no one else has thought of'**

Another all-time favourite in the coach's rent-a-quote repertoire is this: "Well, you can't expect to win when you give up silly goals."

I do hope you're not dismissing the silly goal as something, well, silly. I've found that coaches always take silly goals very seriously. They're more than likely to launch into an elaborate tactical essay on just what happened to allow the silliness to occur.

My impression is that silly goals are scored, unidentified as such (no s/g after the scorer's name), every week. But they remain elusive, closeted creatures. Unquestionably, they spring from the ever-active mind of *Coachus modernus*. But they seem to exist only in the vocabulary of coaches whose teams let them in.

Just as coaches would deny they ever make silly comments, I've yet to meet a player who claims to have scored a silly goal.

Diary

Million-dollar deal...Freddy Adu (left)

Eyes off the ball

"I've never seen anything like it," said Malawi's new English coach Alan Gillet, explaining the abrupt end to the friendly international between his team and Zambia in Blantyre in mid-May.

"My boys got a goal, which looked legitimate, but was ruled out by the referee. There were about six of them celebrating off on the side of the pitch and they did not realise it was not a goal. But the Zambians did. They quickly got the ball, centred off and went and scored at the other end."

Zambia's goal set off crowd trouble, with objects being thrown on to the pitch and eventually officials called off the match.

Both Malawi and Zambia were using the match as a warm-up for their final African Nations Cup qualifiers in June and July.

Land of confusion

When UEFA decided to change the venue of the Moldova-Holland Euro 2004 qualifier from the neglected Republican stadium in Chisinau to the ultra-modern stadium in Tiraspol, it overlooked the political consequences.

Tiraspol is the capital of the self-proclaimed independent republic of Transdniestria, which is not recognised by any country. This pro-Russian and pro-communist state, which was created after a bloody civil war with Moldova in 1992 in which 700 people died, is run by 'president' Igor Smirnov.

Smirnov couldn't prevent the Moldovan flag being used at the game nor the playing of the Moldovan national anthem. But he did draw up a list of 14 Moldovan politicians who weren't welcome.

The list included Vladimir Voronin, the Moldovan president, who wasn't able to attend a match in his own country.

Freddy's in the money

More news on teenage wonderkid – the 'phenom' as the Americans call it – Freddy Adu. Freddy, you will recall, is only 13 but already a star of the US Under-17 side and has signed an endorsement deal with Nike, worth a reported seven-figure sum.

"Freddy is delighted to begin his relationship with Nike," said his 'representative' Dan Segal. We bet he is.

Petit: poor man's Cantona

Barcelona watchers will have been waiting with bated breath for the most hilarious moment in Ruby Wax's recently-repeated television feature about Manu Petit's "wonderful life" in Barcelona. Wax had engaged in her usual OTT fashion with Petit, now at Chelsea, and his wife without apparently being tipped off that the Frenchman rarely appeared in La Liga. "We need someone to fix this," Wax told her producer at half-time, clearly unaware of the stubborn ways of football coaches.

Petit was not happy to discuss the issue later. The expression on his face said it all, as Wax commented. "Yes," mused Petit, "this is a problem for me: because even when I don't speak, I speak."

Clearly, the poor man's Cantona.

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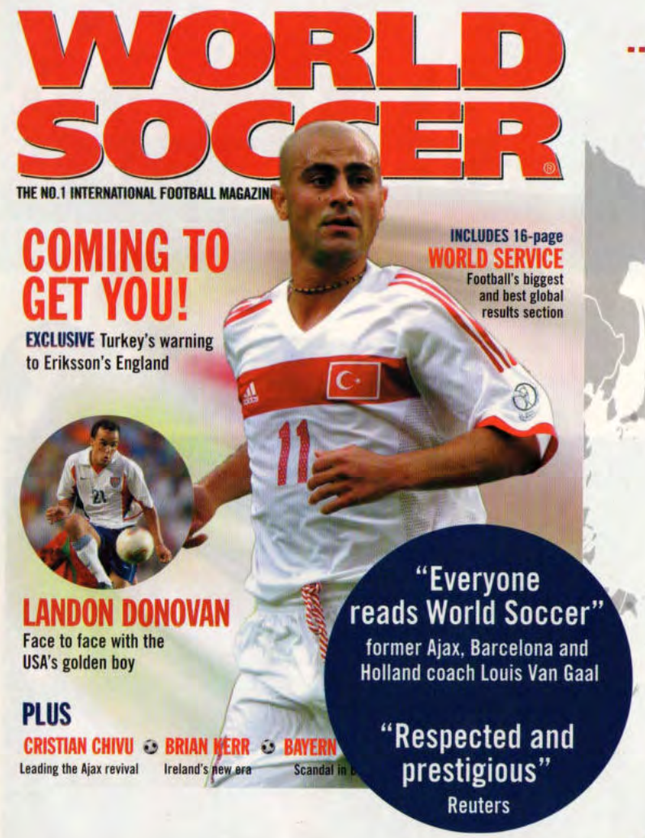

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WORLD SOCCER RICH LIST 2003

'Two Spanish clubs are joined by eight from England, five from Italy, three from Germany and two from Scotland'

Real Madrid... the world's richest club

'Madrid, with an annual income of €252million in the financial year to 2002, have a greater revenue than any other football club. Their income was €45m higher than that of Man United, second in our list'

IT'S OFFICIAL: Real Madrid have displaced Manchester United as the world's richest club, according to the results of our exclusive survey of club finances.

Madrid, with an annual income of €252million in the financial year to 2002, have a greater revenue than any other club. Their income was €45m higher than that of Man United, second in our list.

But only one other Spanish club, Barcelona, features in our top 20. They are joined by a total of eight from England, five from Italy, three from Germany and two from Scotland.

World Soccer's research team, led by football finance expert Simon Banks, used a wide variety of sources. The demands on clubs to disclose financial information are different from country to country, and clubs quoted on stock markets often have to provide more information to investors than they do to their leagues.

In Spain and Germany, clubs have to submit a budget to the League for the forthcoming season. This is often very conservative because it envisages a worst-case scenario as far as income is concerned and won't take into account factors such as a lucrative extended run in the Champions League. A result is that such budgets, which look forward, often bear little resemblance to published accounts, which are retrospective.

Wherever possible, we have used information submitted to stock exchanges; 13 of the top 20 have reported to various exchanges. Clubs such as Liverpool publish full sets of accounts on their website, even though they are not obliged to do so, while others, such as Internazionale, keep their financial cards as close to their chests as legally possible.

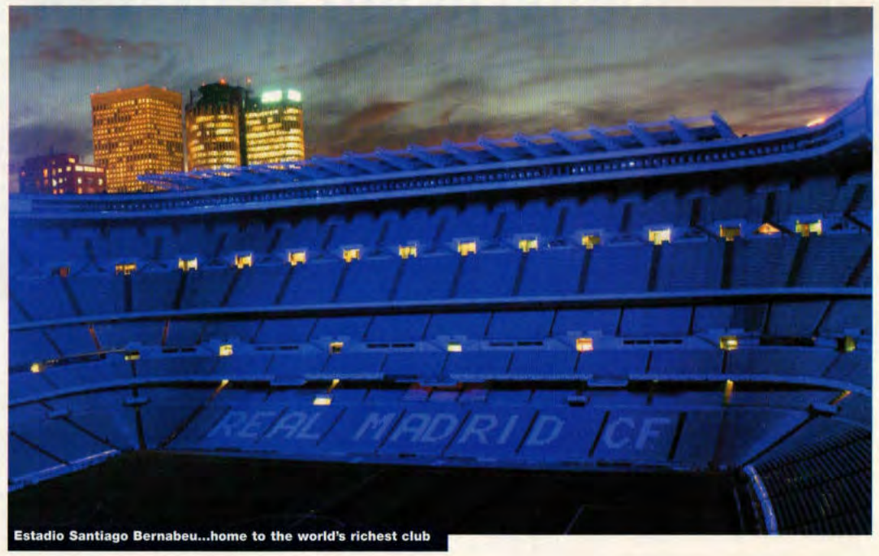
In cases where no figures have been supplied by the clubs, we have used reports that have been uncontested. On a few occasions, figures have had to be estimated, by updating previously published data.

Transfer income excluded

Some clubs include income earned from transfer dealings in their total turnover figures, but we have excluded them. Some also include earnings by subsidiary companies, such as Chelsea, while others are subsidiaries of larger companies themselves and do not provide separate accounts, like Bayer Leverkusen. Debt figures are particularly difficult to verify, and for that reason are not included in the current report.

Some of the figures may vary slightly to those published elsewhere due to currency fluctuations. The rate of conversion used in the final calculations has been £1=€1.4.

	WORLD SOCCER RICH LIST 2003	REVENUE 2001-02, £m	REVENUE 2001-02, €m	WAGE BILL 2001-02, €m	NET TRANSFER SPENDING (2001-02 & 2002-03, €m)
1	Real Madrid	180	252	140	95.6
2	Manchester United	148.1	207.3	98.3	79.9
3	Juventus	139.3	195	103	41.8
4	Bayern Munich	125.7	176	38	37.5
5	Milan	115.5	161.7	107	87.4
6	Chelsea	115	161	76.5	39.7
7	Barcelona	105.7	148	102	53.3
8	Roma	102.7	143.8	90	(0.1)
9	Liverpool	99	138.6	69.1	22.1
10	Arsenal	91	127.4	84.5	33.7
11	Internazionale	89.8	125.7	118	59
12	Leeds	81.5	114.1	74	(24.5)
13	Lazio	80	112	123.7	(0.7)
14	Borussia Dortmund	73.1	102.4	66.3	44.2
15	Newcastle	70.9	99.3	44.4	61.6
16	Tottenham	65	91	44	15
17	Bayer Leverkusen	57.1	80	40	8.7
18	Celtic	56.9	79.6	38.7	10.9
19	Aston Villa	46.7	65.4	30.9	33.4
20	Rangers	44.8	62.7	50.8	(2.8)

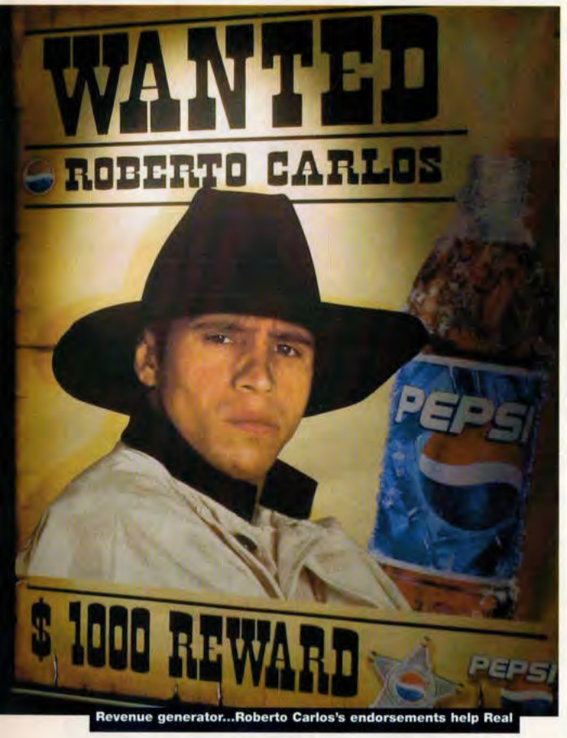


Estadio Santiago Bernabeu...home to the world's richest club

'Wherever possible, we have used information submitted to stock exchanges, but some clubs, such as Internazionale, keep their financial cards as close to their chests as legally possible'

Revenues

Madrid are cash kings



Revenue generator...Roberto Carlos's endorsements help Real

ALTHOUGH revenue is not a perfect measure of a club's financial strength, it is probably the best measure available.

Different clubs state their revenue in different ways. Some include the costs of buying and selling players, others do not. Some clubs factor in ancillary revenues; for example, Chelsea include revenue from a travel subsidiary that has earned as much as €70million a year in the past. Others give very little information at all; Middlesbrough and Bayer Leverkusen are cases in point.

Real Madrid's place at the top of the list will surely surprise nobody, except perhaps a few from Manchester. During the 2001-02 financial year the Spanish club celebrated their centenary, which provided a number of lucrative commercial opportunities. Real, of course, also won the 2002 Champions League and picked up around €42m as their share of the UEFA TV pool, as well as all the gate money from the home ties on the road to the Glasgow Final.

One of the main reasons why Real top the list, however, is that the club retain the image rights to their expensively acquired squad. This means that the club are able to exploit the images of the likes of Ronaldo, Zinedine Zidane and Roberto Carlos in endorsement deals with sponsors. It is also reportedly one of the stumbling blocks to the club signing David Beckham; Beckham's deal with Manchester United allows the player to keep all the proceeds from his endorsements, which are estimated at €8.4m a year.

> 'One of the main reasons why Real Madrid are top is that they retain the image rights to their expensively acquired squad'

Manchester United are considered by many to be the richest club in the world and have shown year-on-year growth in income. However, there are concerns about how long the club's prodigious earnings growth can continue.

As 2001 Premier League champions, United earned €35m from domestic television rights, but the European Commission is pressing for changes in the way Premier League TV rights are sold, and it is doubtful that the club will be able to earn similar amounts when a new TV deal starts the season after next.

Italians and Barcelona lurking

United cannot increase their income from gate money significantly, either, as Old Trafford is full to capacity every home game and cannot be expanded further. The club has therefore focused on exploiting new markets, hence the 2001 tour of the Far East and this year's tour of the US.

Juventus owe their third position to a strong run in the Champions League, which earned them €25.2m, and a highly lucrative domestic TV deal that brought in €84m. When the club have rebuilt their Delle Alpi stadium into a more compact arena that enables them to earn more from catering and corporate hospitality, they may be able to challenge for top spot.

Juve's Italian rivals Milan earn around the same from domestic TV, and more from gate money – but reaching the semi-finals of the UEFA Cup in 2002 earned the club only €9.8m.

Bayern Munich reached the quarter-finals of the Champions League, but domestic TV revenue was flat, and the club need to build a new stadium if they are going to challenge the likes of Real and Manchester United in the earnings stakes.

As explained above, Chelsea's position in the top 10 is a misleading one because they include revenue from their travel company, but a lucrative sponsorship deal with Emirates Airlines and the completed state-of-the-art Stamford Bridge stadium should keep the club in the top 15 for some time.

Barcelona fans may have been frustrated with the performance of their team on the pitch. But reaching the semi-finals of the Champions League in 2002, combined with a domestic TV deal to equal Real's, means that they continue to compete with the best off the pitch. If Barça were to forgo tradition and sign a shirt sponsorship deal they could rise into the top five.

Roma and Inter are split by Liverpool and Arsenal at the foot of the top 10 and both benefit from high gates. Roma earned more from reaching the Champions League second group stage than Inter from their run to the semi-finals of the UEFA Cup in 2002. That could be reversed this season.

Liverpool finally had a decent run in the Champions League, one reason why they are higher than Arsenal, along with the extra 5,000 fans Anfield accommodates. Arsenal are desperate to build a new stadium, but cost issues may delay it.

The lower half of the table is dominated by English clubs, a reflection of the value of the Premier League's TV deal. However, that deal runs out at the end of 2003-04 and it is believed that the next one may be worth as much as 30 per cent less than the current agreement. If that is the case, French clubs such as Lyon, PSG and Marseille, and Ajax of Holland may join the top 20, with the English dropping out.

TOP 20 CLUBS BY TOTAL REVENUE FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2001-02 (€m)

Real Madrid	252
Manchester Utd	207.3
Juventus	195
Bayern Munich	176
Milan	161.7
Chelsea	161
Barcelona	148
Roma	143.8
Liverpool	138.6
Arsenal	127.4
Internazionale	125.7
Leeds	114.1
Lazio	112
Borussia Dortmund	102.4
Newcastle	99.3
Tottenham	91
Bayer Leverkusen	80
Celtic	79.6
Aston Villa	65.4
Rangers	62.7

Offloaded...Lazio sold high earners such as Alessandro Nesta to reduce their outsize wage bill

TOP 20 ANNUAL WAGE BILLS 2001-02

	Wages (€m)	Income (€m)
Real Madrid	140	252
Lazio	123.7	112
Internazionale	118	125.7
Milan	107	161.7
Juventus	103	195
Barcelona	102	148
Manchester Utd	98.3	207.3
Roma	90	143.8
Arsenal	84.5	127.4
Chelsea	76.5	161
Leeds	74	114.1
Liverpool	69.1	138.6
Borussia Dortmund	66.3	102.4
Rangers	50.8	62.7
Newcastle	44.4	99.3
Tottenham	44	91
Bayer Leverkusen	40	80
Celtic	38.7	79.6
Bayern Munich	38	176
Aston Villa	30.9	65.4

Wages

Paying for the privilege

REAL MADRID'S wage bill reflects the status of their all-star squad, and president Florentino Perez believes it is a bill well worth paying. The commercial revenue generated by such high-profile players will, believes Perez, more than justify paying Zinedine Zidane, Ronaldo and Raul nearly €20million a year between them. Madrid's massive wage bill still accounts for only 56 per cent of their income, which is a relatively low ratio for the top 10.

When Lazio revealed their financial results to the Italian Stock Exchange the full extent of the club's parlous position became clear. A wage bill almost €12m in excess of income left the club with no option but to offload some of their highest earners. Since then Ivan De la Pena, Hernan Crespo, Alessandro Nesta and Karel Poborsky have all left the club, which is struggling to come to terms with nearly €200m of debt.

> 'Arsenal's wage bill, at 66 per cent of turnover, is above the salary cap of 60 per cent proposed by G-14, of which they are a member'

When Alvaro Recoba signed his €7m-a-year contract with Inter, he was, briefly, the world's highest-paid player. Since then Inter's wage bill has continued to grow, and although the club earn marginally more than they pay in wages, other costs mean they are racking up losses on a regular basis. Inter president Massimo Moratti seems prepared to bankroll the club for the time being, but surely he will wonder how both Milan and Juventus have fared better domestically and in Europe with lower wage bills.

English clubs appear to have player wages under better control, although Arsenal's outlay, at 66 per cent of turnover, is above the salary cap of 60 per cent proposed by the G-14 group of clubs, of which they are a member.

Leeds' high wage bill has recently been dealt with in brutal fashion, with the likes of Robbie Keane, Robbie Fowler, Jonathan Woodgate and Rio Ferdinand being shipped off the payroll. It is believed more players will follow.

Less generous TV deals on horizon

Rangers' failure to make an impression in Europe has seen turnover fall, while wages have gone up. Despite winning the League this season, players such as Lorenzo Amoruso and Ronald De Boer are expected to leave as the club struggles to reduce their €50m-plus wage bill and tackle a reported €57m of debt.

The boom in player wages is unlikely to last as European TV contracts run out and are renegotiated on less generous terms. Unfortunately for the clubs, many top earners are on contracts longer than future income is guaranteed. It is likely, therefore, that we shall see more clubs with wage bills in excess of income in the future – a recipe for financial crisis.

Transfer spending

Big is beautiful in Madrid

TOTAL income is a good indicator of a club's size, but the differences in the way that clubs are financially structured in different countries make direct comparisons difficult.

What is probably just as pertinent is how much clubs are able to spend on players. Our top 20 shows how much each club spent over the past two seasons, 2001-02 and 2002-03. The figures refer to money spent on purchases minus money received from sales.

Few people will be surprised that Real Madrid have been the biggest spenders – €95.6million – on players over the past two years. President Florentino Perez made the signing of Luis Figo his election pledge in 2000 and he duly delivered. Perez also promised to sort out the club's finances and by virtue of a property deal that sold the club's training ground wiped out Real's debt overnight. This enabled Madrid to buy the likes of Zinedine Zidane and Ronaldo.

The monies invested by Perez in players have yielded trophies, including two Champions Leagues in the past three seasons.

'As clubs cut back on spending, Madrid, Milan and Man Utd will still buy the best players. They will just pay less for them'

Prize catch...Zidane is welcomed to Real Madrid by Alfredo Di Stefano

By contrast to Madrid, Milan have spent €87m and won nothing. Milan's total spending in 2001-02 was €78m – which bought Andrea Pirlo, Filippo Inzaghi and Rui Costa. This came two years after Milan paid Kyiv Dynamo €22m for Andrii Shevchenko. However, given the club's high earnings from their run to this season's Champions League Final, president Silvio Berlusconi may consider the transfer money well spent.

The link between footballing success and transfer spending would at first glance appear to be strong in England, with Manchester United, who have just won another League title, coming in at third in the list. However, the presence of Newcastle, Middlesbrough and Manchester City in the top 10 says a lot about money in the English game and the ambition of those clubs. All three of those mentioned have spent heavily in the past two seasons, with little recouped from sales. Newcastle have bucked the financial trend for downsizing, spending heavily on the likes of Jonathan Woodgate, Titus Bramble and Hugo Viana.

The most astute operator in the European transfer market would appear to be Parma, who have recorded a player trading surplus of €100m over the past four years. When, for example, the club broke their transfer record by paying €26m for Hidetoshi Nakata from Roma in 2001, they did so only after selling Lilian Thuram and Gianluigi Buffon to Juventus and Marcio Amoroso to Borussia Dortmund for a combined €98m.

The financial crisis in the Italian game has led to a dramatic fall in spending by the big hitters of Serie A. Milan and Inter continue to spend heavily, helped by wealthy owners in Berlusconi and Massimo Moratti respectively. However, others have had to cut back drastically.

Lazio, for example spent nearly €105m between 2000 and 2002, buying the likes of Claudio Lopez, Hernan Crespo and Gaizka Mendieta. But last year they sold Alessandro Nesta and Crespo for a combined €50m, resulting in a €40m surplus for the year.

The presence of Dortmund but not Bayern Munich in the top 10 is surprising, given that Bayern feature in the revenue top 10. Bayern may have spent €21m last summer on Michael Ballack, Sebastian Deisler and Ze Roberto, but they recouped €4.5m from the sale of Carsten Jancker to Udinese. Ballack and Ze Roberto were bought from Bayer Leverkusen, who used the money to buy six players, the most expensive being Franco from Sao Paulo for €8.4m. By contrast, Dortmund spent heavily in 2001 on Amoroso and Jan Koller. Strict Bundesliga rules on club solvency, combined with uncertainty over future TV revenue, have made German clubs cautious in the transfer market. That situation looks likely to continue for the foreseeable future.

Had the table been collated last year, no doubt Leeds would have figured as they spent nearly €74m in pursuing the stated aim of regular Champions League football. Their subsequent failure to qualify for Europe's top club competition last season has led to a fire sale – players worth €63m have left Elland Road as the club make a desperate attempt to balance the books and avoid bankruptcy.

The financial crisis in the European game means that it is unlikely we will ever again see spending reach the heights of the 2001-02 season, when the top clubs spent almost €400m on players, and half as much again last summer.

As the majority of clubs cut back on their spending, prices will fall and the likes of Madrid, Milan and Manchester United will still be able to buy the best players. They will just pay less for them.

TOP 20 CLUBS BY NET TRANSFER EXPENDITURE – 2001-02 & 2002-03 SEASONS COMBINED

Club	Expenditure (€m)
Real Madrid	95.6
Milan	87.4
Manchester Utd	79.9
Newcastle	61.6
Internazionale	59.0
Barcelona	53.3
Middlesbrough	50.6
Borussia Dortmund	44.2
Manchester City	43.9
Juventus	41.8
Chelsea	39.7
Deportivo La Coruna	39.7
Bayern Munich	37.5
Arsenal	33.7
Aston Villa	33.4
Liverpool	22.1
Schalke	19.5
Sunderland	19.1
Fulham	15.4
Tottenham	15.0

Packing them in...Man United had the highest average home League gate of any club in 2001-02

Attendances

Bums on seats

HOW many people actually pay money to go and watch a team is surely a good indicator of that club's financial strength. The table shows the top 10 average home attendances for League matches for the 2001-02 season. It is important to bear in mind that the figures do not include domestic Cup or European matches.

Manchester United's position at the top of the table tells only half the story because the club sold out Old Trafford for every Premier League game. The only reason the average was less than the capacity of 67,683 was that some seats had to be left empty for security reasons at certain games. There is no doubt that if Old Trafford was larger it would still sell out, but the club have no plans to increase capacity further. With Barcelona and Real Madrid both experiencing a surge in gates in 2002-03, United's continued position at the top of this list is far from assured.

Borussia Dortmund's average gate was nearly 3,000 fewer than capacity, and while the Westfalenstadion was full for most home games, midweek matches were less well attended. Schalke's average gate was only 300 fewer than capacity, the people of Gelsenkirchen showing remarkable loyalty to their club. That said, the €183million Arena has 17,000 standing places, which helps keep ticket prices within the reach of most supporters.

Perhaps the most surprising figure from Germany was the relatively low attendance at Bayern Munich, commonly regarded as the country's most popular club. However, Bayern's fan base is spread across Bavaria, and many supporters find it difficult to attend midweek matches, especially Champions League games with their late kick-off times.

'Manchester United are able to gross over €900,000 in gate money from each home game'

It is also surprising that the average gate at the Bernabeu was 10,000 fewer than capacity, but Real fans tend to be selective about which matches they attend, and many Spanish games are shown live on TV.

If Bayern Munich's lowly position in the table surprises, the absence of Juventus from the top 10 is remarkable, given the club's undoubted popularity. But while Juve draw support from across Italy, many Turin locals favour Torino. Plans to knock down the cavernous Delle Alpi and build a smaller, more compact stadium on the same site appear to make sense given that Juve's average home gate was just 40,000.

Internazionale can just about claim to be the best supported club in both Milan and Italy. In sharing the San Siro stadium with Milan the comparison of support is a valid one. The fact that Inter have twice as many season-ticket holders – 40,000 – as Milan reinforces the claim.

Celtic are the only club from outside the big four leagues to make the top 10; their rivals Rangers would surely also have figured if Ibrox could hold more than 50,000.

Translating attendances into wealth is extremely difficult, given the disparity in ticket prices. The cheapest ticket at Old Trafford is €26, the cheapest at San Siro less than half that, while standing at Dortmund costs only €8.

Manchester United are able to gross over €900,000 in gate money from each home game. So while the club may not stay at the top of the attendance league for ever, their place either top or second of the income league looks more secure.

TOP 10 AVERAGE HOME ATTENDANCES IN DOMESTIC LEAGUE 2001-02

Club	Attendance
Manchester Utd	67,558
Borussia Dortmund	65,700
Real Madrid	63,645
Internazionale	62,434
Schalke	60,429
Roma	59,402
Milan	58,616
Celtic	58,587
Barcelona	54,211
Bayern Munich	52,765

'The mobile phone boom has been a godsend for a beleaguered football economy, but like all booms it will come to an end, and it seems unlikely values will continue to rise'

Loud and clear...Bayern Munich command the largest shirt sponsorship deal because they are the top club in Europe's biggest market

Sponsorship

Germany leads the way

THE list of the top 10 shirt sponsorship deals gives a good indication of the appeal of different clubs. In trying to reach new markets potential sponsors undertake detailed research into the popularity of different clubs, which is reflected in how much they are prepared to pay for the privilege of being displayed on a club's shirt.

Bayern Munich head the list with a €17million-a-year deal with mobile phone company T-Mobile, and there are two other German clubs in the top 10 – Dortmund and Leverkusen. They are able to command high rates for their shirt space since Germany has Europe's largest population and is therefore the largest market. The relatively small size of the Spanish market explains why Deportivo La Coruna and Valencia are absent from the list, although if Barcelona allowed a sponsor's logo to deface their hallowed shirt the deal would certainly feature.

One way clubs can maximise shirt sponsorship revenue is to have different sponsors for different competitions. Juventus, for example, have Fastweb on their shirts in Serie A games and Tamoil in the Champions League. Similarly, Lyon are in the top 10 thanks to a multiple deal with Renault Trucks for Champions League fixtures, and tyre-maker Continental and mobile phone firm NC Numericable for domestic games. The French League is unique in allowing clubs to display multiple images on their shirts.

Of the sponsors themselves, mobile phone firms are involved in half the top 10 deals. The massive costs they incurred in securing third-generation mobile licences have to be recouped, and the competition for subscribers is intense. The mobile firms believe football is the best medium through which to reach their potential customers, and the costs of sponsoring even the biggest clubs compare favourably with the costs of massive advertising campaigns. The mobile boom has been a godsend for a beleaguered football economy, but like all booms it will come to an end, and it seems unlikely values will continue to rise.

Grab your partners...

The list features only shirt sponsors and it should be borne in mind that many clubs have several other sponsors and 'partners'. Manchester United, for example, have eight partners, including "official grooming partner Gillette" and Budweiser, supplier of "the official beer of Manchester United".

PSV Eindhoven, whose relationship with the Philips electronics company precluded the club from making money from another shirt sponsor, pioneered this approach. The club's 10 partners each pay €670,000 a year, which, added to Philips' support, would earn them a place in the top 10.

Of course, sponsors usually garner some other benefits, such as corporate hospitality, because of their investment. But the main reason companies sponsor football clubs is to get their brand known by the maximum number of people. The ubiquity of top-flight football in the media means sponsorship of a club that regularly competes in Europe remains one of the most cost-effective ways of achieving that aim.

TOP 10 SHIRT SPONSORSHIP DEALS

Club	Sponsor	Value (€m per year)
Bayern Munich	T-Mobile	17
Juventus	Fastweb/Tamoil	14.2
Real Madrid	Siemens Mobile	12
Manchester United	Vodafone	11
Borussia Dortmund	E.ON	10
Chelsea	Emirates Airlines	9.7
Lyon	Renault Trucks/ Continental/ NC Numericable	9.1
Lazio	Siemens Mobile	8.9
Milan	Opel	8.5
Bayer Leverkusen	RWE	8.5

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TV ratings

View to a killing

ATTEMPTING to judge which clubs attract the most television viewers is an exercise fraught with difficulty. With many clubs' top matches shown only on pay-TV, where the audience is restricted, ratings are not always a reliable guide to a club's appeal. A match between two lower-ranking English Premier League teams, for example, will often draw a larger worldwide audience than, say, a top Serie A clash since the former could be shown on terrestrial TV in China, where up to 300 million may watch, while the Italian game may be available only to satellite TV subscribers.

If a game is played at 12.30pm in Europe, as are many Premier League matches, it will coincide with the peak viewing period in the Far East. Top Italian games are often shown early evening, when the massive potential Far Eastern audience is tucked up in bed.

There is, however, one way of assessing the relative televisual appeal of Europe's top clubs – through analysis of Champions League viewing figures.

The competition's group stages offer the best measure because they pitch like against like. The matches are all shown on midweek evenings, peak viewing time in Europe, and many are available on free-to-air television. The practice of showing one night's games on terrestrial TV and another night's on pay platforms means that some comparisons are difficult. However, the accompanying table shows the most viewed group games of last season's competition by single domestic market, with all the games having been broadcast on free TV.

Manchester United's home game against Juventus was shown live in Italy and the UK and gained the highest combined viewing figures, with over 9m watching in the UK and over 8m in Italy. Both clubs are the most popular, in terms of TV viewers, in their respective countries, so their combined top ranking comes as no surprise. But the viewing figure was boosted by the fact that both teams are a draw in their opposition's market. Manchester United's matches against Bayer Leverkusen, Olympiakos and Deportivo La Coruna were watched by fewer than 6m viewers in the UK; the two matches against Juventus drew audiences of 9m and 7.4m. Likewise in Italy, the 'Old Lady's' away game against United drew 8.4m viewers, while the match at Feyenoord attracted only 7.6m.

Bayern Munich are the most popular club in Germany and their match away to Milan was the most watched of all the group games in terms of single domestic market; 9.26m viewers watched the game in Germany, over 200,000 more than the British viewers of Manchester United's home tie against Juventus, but the smaller Italian audience for the Milan-Bayern game meant the United-Juve tie was the most viewed overall.

'Man United v Juventus had the highest combined viewing figures of last season's Champions League group games'

Germany out of tune

With Germany having Europe's largest population, it is surprising its clubs, especially Bayern Munich, have not achieved even higher domestic ratings.

There are other curiosities in the German market. Bayer Leverkusen went on to reach the Final but hardly figure in the group games ratings chart as a result of the German TV companies choosing to feature Dortmund and Bayern instead.

The televisual appeal of clubs is important not only because it affects how much the club can make from the sale of TV rights, but also because it determines sponsorship values. The Champions League is seen in over 100 countries around the world, which is why multinational companies are prepared to pay massive fees to clubs to have their logo featured on shirts. The more money a club earns, the better quality players it can afford to employ and the more success it can achieve on the pitch – and via the TV screen.

TOP-RATED CHAMPIONS LEAGUE GROUP MATCHES 2001-02 (by single domestic market)

Match	Viewers (millions/country)
Milan-Bayern Munich	9.259 (Ger)
Man Utd-Juventus	9.016 (UK)
Man Utd-Juventus	8.399 (Ita)
Real Madrid-Roma	7.647 (Ita)
Feyenoord-Juventus	7.562 (Ita)
Juventus-Man Utd	7.433 (UK)
Milan-Bayern Munich	7.313 (Ita)
Inter-Lyon	7.261 (Ita)
Inter-Barcelona	7.232 (Ita)
B Dortmund-Arsenal	6.971 (Ger)
Real Madrid-B Dortmund	6.945 (Spa)
B Dortmund-Milan	6.771 (Ita)
B Dortmund-Milan	6.560 (Ger)
AEK Athens-Real Madrid	6.332 (Spa)
Real Madrid-B Dortmund	6.267 (Ger)
Bayern Munich-Deportivo	6.126 (Ger)
Roma-Real Madrid	6.006 (Spa)
Inter-Barcelona	5.976 (Spa)
Arsenal-Valencia	5.969 (UK)
Bayer Leverkusen-Man Utd	5.889 (UK)

Vision on...Milan v Bayern attracted Germany's biggest audience, but significantly fewer in the smaller Italian market

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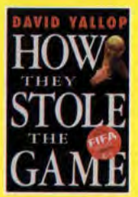

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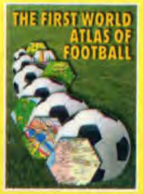

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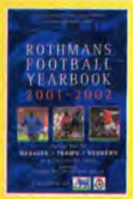

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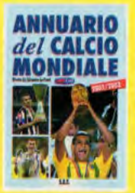

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2003 CONFEDERATIONS CUP

A tournament too far?

Keir Radnedge reports on the competition opposed by clubs, players and federations

BACK in the dim and distant mists of FIFA time – which means little more than a decade ago – someone had the bright idea of cosying up to the voter potential in the developing world by launching a tournament to be contested by all the regional national team champions.

It was a logical extension of the mania for world domination, which would also launch the Club World Championship (now sunk).

The first hints had begun emerging at the 1990 World Cup finals that a groundswell of impatience was developing within Africa and Asia about the power that continued to be wielded by the traditional Europe/South America axis.

Saudi Arabia were among the leading progressives, and it was their initiative of the King Fahd Cup that was duly converted into the first Confederations Cup in 1992. Controversy has pursued the event ever since. It has proved valuable in political terms for successive FIFA presidents Joao Havelange and Sepp Blatter, and the developing world representatives have enjoyed the cash rewards derived from television and sponsorship. It is those twin commercial pillars, however, that have ensured the competition's survival for both this year and 2005 – and they are among the worst reasons for its existence.

The Europeans, not to put too fine a point on it, hate the Confederations Cup. France are there this time as hosts since that was the only way to guarantee the presence of the reigning European champions. European distaste is evident from the presence of Turkey, stepping in after both Italy (European Championship runners-up in 2000) and Germany (World Cup runners-up in 2002) turned down the invite.

On top of everything else, the Confederations Cup flies in the face of Blatter's voluble demands for a reduction in fixtures worldwide. The Confederations Cup seriously undermines all his strictures to the confederations, the national associations and the clubs about the need to slim down the international programme.

No abandonment on horizon

But FIFA, for contractual reasons, is stuck with at least two more Confederations Cups – and France will be hosting the sixth, with the groups set up to produce a possible repeat of the 1998 World Cup Final, when the French beat Brazil 3-0 in the same venue, the Stade de France.

Argentina were the first winners in Saudi in 1992 under Alfio Basile, when only four teams entered. They defeated their hosts 3-1 in the Final with goals from Leonardo Rodriguez, Diego Simeone and Claudio Caniggia. Three years later Denmark followed up their shock 1992 European Championship success by winning the King Fahd Cup. They beat the Saudis 2-0, then ousted Mexico on penalties, courtesy of sharp goalkeeping from Lars Hogh, in the semi-finals. Holders Argentina were despatched 2-0 in the Final without too much difficulty. Michael Laudrup, with a penalty, and Peter Rasmussen scored the goals.

In 1997, the balance of power swung back to South America, with Brazil previewing everything they would produce up to the semi-finals of the subsequent World Cup. The Saudis fell 3-0, Australia hung on for a goalless draw, then Mexico went down 3-2. A 2-0 semi-final win over the Czech Republic was followed by a 6-0 win over the Socceroos, who had also made it to the Final. Romario and Ronaldo scored seven and four goals respectively. What might have happened had Romario been fit and in favour a year later?

The event moved away from Saudi Arabia for the first time in 1999 when hosts Mexico triumphed – beating Brazil 4-3 in the Final – and then it was on to South Korea and Japan in 2001, when FIFA tried to justify the event's existence by promoting it as a World Cup dress rehearsal. Fat lot of good that did France. They were missing the likes of Fabien Barthez and Zinedine Zidane yet still swept aside Koreans, Mexicans and Brazilians on their way to a 1-0 Final win over Japan. Yet along the way, intriguingly, France lost 1-0 to Australia. It was written off at the time as a meaningless defeat in a 'dead' group game. But, with hindsight, maybe that was the first hint of a French fracture.

Chance for Gallic redemption

France are likely to be without Zidane again this time. The federation has agreed not to call him in as long as he remains needed by Real Madrid in the closing stages of their Spanish championship bid. The same applies to fellow midfielder Claude Makelele. No doubt other luckless superstars will fall victim to domestic accidents and such like before the opener on June 18.

France take on Japan, New Zealand and Colombia in Group A with a rehabilitation task at hand. World champions Brazil put their prestige on the line against last year's awkward rivals Turkey, Cameroon and the United States in Group B.

And the value? Do not look for it from the established superstars. The Confederations Cup, if it is anything, must be a stage for ambitious new football principles. The event has enough of a credibility gap already.

Defending champions...France take the trophy in 2001

Stade Gerland, Lyon

Stade Geoffroy-Guichard, Saint-Etienne

Stade de France, Paris

FACTS

THE TEAMS

France (Hosts, holders, European champions)
Brazil (world champions)
United States (winners of 2002 CONCACAF Gold Cup)
Colombia (winners of 2001 Copa America)
Cameroon (winners of 2002 African Nations Cup)
New Zealand (winners of 2002 Oceania Nations Cup)
Japan (winners of 2000 Asian Cup)
Turkey (replacement for World Cup runners-up Germany)

THE VENUES

Lyon (Stade Gerland)
Paris (Stade de France)
Saint-Etienne (Stade Geoffroy-Guichard)

THE GAMES

Group A		
18.06.03	*Paris*	*New Zealand-Japan*
	Lyon	*France-Colombia*
20.06.03	*Lyon*	*Colombia-New Zealand*
	Saint-Etienne	*France-Japan*
22.06.03	*Paris*	*France-New Zealand*
	Saint-Etienne	*Japan-Colombia*
Group B		
19.06.03	*Saint-Etienne*	*Turkey-United States*
	Paris	*Brazil-Cameroon*
21.06.03	*Paris*	*Cameroon-Turkey*
	Lyon	*Brazil-United States*
23.06.03	*Saint-Etienne*	*Brazil-Turkey*
	Lyon	*United States-Cameroon*
Semi-finals		
26.06.03	*Lyon*	*Winners Gp B-Runners-up Gp A*
26.06.03	*Paris*	*Winners Gp A-Runners-up Gp B*
Third-place match		
28.06.03	*Saint-Etienne*	
Final		
29.06.03	*Paris*	

Colombia
Back to the future

Return of Maturana raises expectations

Back in the frame...Victor Aristizabal

WINNING the Libertadores Cup with Atletico Nacional, qualifying for the World Cups of 1990 and 1994, the 2001 Copa America victory – behind the major triumphs of Colombian football is Francisco Maturana. Now in charge of the national team for the fourth time, he is ideally placed to assess his country's footballing development.

"At first we played like Peruvians," he says, "with lots of one-twos between Carlos Valderrama and Bernardine Redin. Then Fredy Rincon emerged to give us more depth, and then Tino Asprilla, Adolfo Valencia and Ivan Valenciano gave us a devastating attack. And now our team is all speed and talent." They do, however, lack a cutting edge. Juan Pablo Angel and Jairo Castillo have promised to provide it, but not since Asprilla have Colombia had a truly world-class striker. Maturana has not ruled out a recall for the former Parma and Newcastle star, currently in Chile. Another veteran, Copa America hero Victor Aristizabal, is showing top form in Brazil and could come into consideration.

'Our team is all speed and talent. Now it's a question of patience. The goals will come'
Francisco Maturana

In the absence of the ageing A-Team attack, Colombia have suffered a 1-0 defeat followed by three goalless draws since Maturana resumed control – a sequence of results that also reveals he is a more cautious figure than the cavalier coach of a decade ago.

"For the moment my biggest worry is the defence," he says. "I want it to be really solid. There are details we're looking at, such as the role of the midfield in winning the ball back. It's a question of patience. The goals will come."

Tim Vickery

TACTICS

No longer is Colombian football known for its tactical naivety. "We're close to what happens globally," says Maturana, "and we have the flexibility to try different approaches in the same game." Club side Deportivo Cali are clearly an influence. Maturana describes them as "playing good modern football. They deny space to the opposition and create space for themselves with talent, speed and technique." Colombia will attempt to do the same. They will mark zonally with the excellent Ivan Cordoba-Mario Yepes combination in the middle of the back four. The midfield will have a more defensive balance than previously, with (Libertadores commitments permitting) Jhon Restrepo filling a key ball-winning role. The idea is to provide a platform for playmaker Geovanny Hernandez, who is expected to dictate a tempo faster than in the days of Carlos Valderrama. He will operate behind the front two – or behind a lone striker if Colombia opt for 4-5-1.

France
Positive thinking

Hosts and holders shrug off negative vibes

ALTHOUGH a number of Gallic club coaches – the latest being Monaco's Didier Deschamps – and national team players have voiced their doubts as to the value of the Confederations Cup, France boss Jacques Santini is determined to treat the event in a positive manner.

Santini himself was not enamoured by the timing of the competition at the end of a gruelling season and is unlikely to have a full-strength squad. But he insists the aim is to retain the trophy they won in the Far East in 2001, adding that a period of squad-bonding and tournament action should be most beneficial.

There will be some high-profile absentees from the French ranks. Patrick Vieira's inflamed knee makes him a non-starter, Emmanuel Petit and David Trezeguet are likely to be given the summer off to recuperate from long-standing groin and knee problems respectively. Further call-offs, whether genuine or contrived, are bound to follow.

'Santini was not enamoured by the timing of the competition but the aim is still to retain the trophy'

Santini may feel the time is right to test new faces. Uncapped players such as Auxerre centre-back Jean-Alain Boumsong, Monaco defender Sebastien Squillaci, Internazionale midfielder Stephane Dalmat, Parma keeper Sebastien Frey, Fulham playmaker Steed Malbranque and Lyon striker Pegguy Luyindula were included in the preliminary squad and at least one or two could make their debuts.

Santini has proved himself a more than competent leader of *Les Bleus*. Five wins out of five in the Euro 2004 qualifiers means his team are almost home and dry. They seem far happier with his 4-4-2 system than the excessively rigid 4-2-3-1 of yore, and individually there have been no shortage of successes. Notably, these have been the attacking of Thierry Henry and the assured way Sochaux defensive midfielder Benoit Pedretti, Chelsea stopper William Gallas and multi-skilled Auxerre forward Olivier Kapo have begun their national team careers.

But it has not all been champagne. The 2-0 home friendly defeat by the Czech Republic in March and the 2-1 Euro 2004 win over Israel in Palermo the next month left Santini bemoaning a lack of aggression and desire in his charges.

Nick Bidwell

Striking success...Thierry Henry

TACTICS

The Roger Lemerre days of the lone central striker and Thierry Henry confined to an ill-fitting role wide on the left are long gone. Santini is first and last a 4-4-2 man and places much emphasis on a two-man central strikeforce, backed up by a pair of attack-minded midfielders, one wide on the right (often Sylvain Wiltord) and Zinedine Zidane floating with menace in his favoured centre-left zone. A pair of defensively-inclined midfielders patrol in front of the flat back four.

Japan
Zico's challenge

New coach faces biggest test yet

THE Confederations Cup is Japan's first major challenge under the new management of Zico.

Few know the Japanese game more thoroughly than the Brazilian great. He arrived at Sumitomo Metals before the J.League began and maintained his links with the club that became Kashima Antlers, first as player, then technical director and even briefly as manager in 1999, until taking on the national team job. Antlers players fill several key positions in the team. France 98 defenders Yutaka Akita and Akira Narahashi have been recalled, Koji Nakata has shone as a holding midfielder recently, and Mitsuo Ogasawara is challenging for an attacking midfield role.

Tough task...Shinji Ono must battle for his place

The main attention, however, is on the players based abroad, notably Naohiro Takahara of Hamburg, Japan's top striker who missed the World Cup through illness. His probable partner is Takayuki Suzuki of Genk.

Parma's Hidetoshi Nakata is again the key in midfield, but Feyenoord's Shinji Ono must compete hard for his place against Reggina's Shunsuke Nakamura and Alex of Shimizu S-Pulse for the attacking midfield positions, and Fulham's Junichi Inamoto as well as Koji Nakata for a holding role.

'Japan will arrive with little match practice after the Iraq war and SARS played havoc with Zico's preparations'

The defenders are all Japan-based. Ryuzo Morioka of Shimizu S-Pulse is finally back after a long-term injury and pressing Tsuneyasu Miyamoto and Naoki Matsuda for the other central position alongside Akita. Jubilo's Toshihiro Hattori is Zico's first choice on the left. In goal, Seigo Narazaki, the J.League's highest-paid Japanese player, remains No 1, challenged by Antlers' Hitoshi Sogahata. Portsmouth's Yoshikatsu Kawaguchi did himself few favours on his return in the recent friendly against Uruguay.

Zico's results have been respectable: Jamaica 1-1; a 2-0 defeat by Argentina; Uruguay 2-2; then a morale-boosting 1-0 win over South Korea in Seoul. The Iraq war and SARS have, however, played havoc with Zico's preparations, leading first to cancellation of a US tour and then of the East Asian Championship with South Korea, China and Hong Kong. Portugal and Nigeria also pulled out of friendlies because of SARS.

Japan play Argentina again on June 8 and are searching for an opponent on June 11, but will arrive in France with far less match practice than planned.

Mike Plastow

TACTICS

Gone is the highly-drilled team of 2002, fostered step by step from Under-20 level by Philippe Troussier. In its place is a standard 4-4-2 heavily dependent on individual skill. Like Troussier, Zico is spoilt for choice in midfield with Hidetoshi Nakata again set to play a big role. Junichi Inamoto, who produced goals for Fulham from midfield, is likely to be used in a more defensive role.

New Zealand
Cashing in

Oceania champions just happy to take the money

IT WAS highly significant that, after New Zealand secured a Confederations Cup berth via success at the Oceania Nations Cup in Auckland last July, the Kiwi media focused on the resultant £350,000 windfall. There was no talk of the team making an impact in France.

'The Kiwi media made much of the windfall. There was no talk of the team making an impact in France'

FIFA's gold is indeed a godsend for a New Zealand FA that has long struggled financially. Ironically, though, New Zealand's presence in Paris and Lyon will owe much to Australia's even greater fiscal woes.

Australia travelled to Auckland with just one Europe-based player. For once, they were the underdogs when facing New Zealand in the Oceania Final and duly succumbed 1-0. Despite their opponents' comparative weakness, New Zealand's newly-appointed English coach Mick Waitt earned kudos in moulding a winning unit from players mustered from around the globe.

Up for it...Chris Killen (white) has a point to prove

All ambitious New Zealand footballers must move overseas to further their careers. The local League, which struggles to draw attendances of 500, operates only on a semi-professional basis.

Any interest generated by the Confederations Cup will depend greatly upon how the All Whites fare. Only twice previously have they appeared on the world stage. In both the 1982 World Cup finals and 1999 Confederations Cup in Mexico all three matches were lost.

For New Zealand, this is a rare chance to rub shoulders with the elite and swell its coffers. Any international credibility gained while doing so will be a bonus.

Paul Moon

TACTICS

Twelve survivors from four years ago were selected for the trip to France. The team boasts an experienced backbone. Keeper Mike Utting, who excelled in Mexico, has been recalled after widespread admiration for his efforts to combat alcoholism, and is likely to be a key man again. In defence, captain Chris Zoricich (ex-Leyton Orient), Danny Hay, Ryan Nelsen and Gerard Davis are seasoned campaigners. Waitt also has Barnsley's David Mulligan at his disposal. Playmaker Ivan Vicelich has made his presence felt in the Dutch First Division, while Aaran Lines operates as a deep-lying winger in Waitt's fluid 4-4-2. Veteran forward Vaughan Coveny will probably make the starting line-up due to his effectiveness when dropping into midfield. Though lacking pace, Chris Killen can expect some game time, if fit, as he is a gifted, old-fashioned type of striker. Killen, discarded by Manchester City in 2002, has a point to prove. But then so does the entire team.

Brazil
Hangover blues

It's been a frustrating start for pragmatic Parreira

WHEN Carlos Alberto Parreira took over as Brazil coach at the start of the year, he quickly decided there would be no massive rebuilding of the team that won the 2002 World Cup.

Believing the team's experience would be invaluable when the 2006 qualifiers begin this September, Parreira decreed that teenage prodigies such as Diego and Robinho of Santos would have to wait their turn and that, for the time being, Brazil would continue to depend on the likes of Rivaldo, Ronaldo, Ronaldinho, Cafu and Roberto Carlos.

Mr Reliable...Gilberto Silva

However, events have forced Parreira to change the team sooner than he would have wanted. Some players, notably keeper Marcos, whose club Palmeiras are now in the Second Division, and Rivaldo, who has fallen out with Milan, have suffered spectacular losses of form. Others such as central defender Lucio and midfielder Juninho have been hit by injuries, while Roberto Carlos has been banned for three internationals after his shoulder-charge on the referee during the 2-1 defeat by Portugal.

'Marcos' and Rivaldo's loss of form have forced Parreira to make changes sooner than he would have wanted'

All this has made it a frustrating return for Parreira, who has still to enjoy a victory since reoccupying the hot seat for a third time. A 0-0 draw away to China, where Brazil's players arrived exhausted and trained only once, was followed by defeat in Portugal and another goalless draw in Mexico as Brazil remain slumped in a very long post-World Cup hangover.

The situation is unlikely to improve at the Confederations Cup. Parreira has already ruled out fielding players such as Ronaldo, tired after a long season in Europe, and if Santos reach the Libertadores Cup Final, he will be unable to call on any of their players either. That means no Robinho or Diego, for example.

In short, he is likely to have to improvise and hope he does not suffer the same fate that befell Emerson Leao two years ago in Japan and South Korea. Leao was forced to take a 'C' team of players, drawn from Brazilian clubs who had not made the final stages of the local championships. After goalless draws with Canada and Japan, Brazil lost to France in the semi-finals and were humiliatingly beaten by Australia in the third-place match.

Despite all the mitigating circumstances, Leao was sacked as he waited to board the plane for the 24-hour trip back to Brazil.

Brian Homewood

TACTICS

Parreira's first move was to ditch the 3-5-2 used at the World Cup and go 4-4-2. He tends to be fairly pragmatic. His teams like to keep the ball in midfield as they patiently look for an opening, and quickly get behind the ball when not in possession. Gilberto Silva will play a key role, having proved very reliable in central midfield. Cafu will enjoy much less freedom than at the World Cup, the 4-4-2 putting him back to the defensive grind, a much weaker part of his game.

Cameroon
Schafer's close shave

German coach knows it is time to deliver after recent poor performances

CAMEROON'S German coach Winfried Schafer goes into the Confederations Cup under pressure to deliver favourable performances. Since their disappointing showing at the World Cup, when they failed to reach the second round, the Indomitable Lions' poor run of form has continued, losing friendlies to the Ivory Coast (3-0) and Tunisia (1-0).

Schafer has faced additional criticism for his refusal to live in Cameroon, preferring to base himself in his native Germany, where, he argues, he is best placed to observe Cameroon's Europe-based professionals.

'The coach has faced additional criticism for his refusal to live in Cameroon instead of his native Germany'

Five uncapped players were named in the squad that lost to the Ivory Coast in February. Auxerre's Jean-Joel Perrier Doumbe and Mohammed Idrissa of Hannover made their debuts, while Timothy Atouba of Basle was one of several other youngsters to gain valuable international experience.

One of the reasons Schafer has turned to the new faces is the retirement of several established players. Striker Patrick Mboma was omitted from recent squads, but the coach has indicated his determination to persuade veteran defender Raymond Kalla to reverse his decision to quit. However, Schafer faces a more difficult task with another refusenik, Arsenal's Lauren Etame Mayer, who quit last December, amid rumours that World Cup bonus payments had not been passed on to the players.

Must do better...Winfried Schafer

After the World Cup, Schafer was linked with the manager's job at English First Division side Brighton, but he agreed a new two-year deal to stay in charge of Cameroon until the 2004 African Nations Cup. However, unless his team put in a creditable performance at the Confederations Cup, he may find himself open to other offers earlier than he had planned.

John Holmesdale

TACTICS

The recent run of poor results belie the fact that Cameroon can still call upon talented players with extensive European experience. Lucien Mettomo has replaced Raymond Kalla in central defence in recent matches, playing alongside Rigobert Song, with Bill Tchato at right-back and Geremi Njitap on the left. Eric Djemba has played himself into the starting line-up in midfield, alongside Marc-Vivien Foe and Salomon Olembe. In attack Samuel Eto'o and Joseph-Desire Job have been the preferred starting pair.

Turkey
Under pressure

World Cup bronze medallists feel the heat after England defeat

COACH Senol Gunes will be fired up for the Confederations Cup, which Turkey is attending by special invitation, but the same may not be true of his charges.

With Gunes' position rumoured to be on the line yet again following the surprisingly limp 2-0 loss to England in April and a 4-0 drubbing by the Czech Republic in a subsequent friendly, he is looking for a good result.

Lessons learned...Rustu Recber

Gunes has repeatedly said Turkey must forget their success in coming third at the World Cup and focus on keeping up standards, but there is little sign that he has been getting through. Most in Turkey agree that the England defeat was due to over-confidence from a team whose drastic improvement in the past decade has wiped out memories of the days when they were beaten by cricket-score margins.

"The players were being described as heroes in the media and it went to their heads," confesses keeper Rustu Recber. "I've never seen such a lacklustre performance." He says Turkey have learned their lessons, but this new determination might take some time to filter through if the players arrive in France exhausted from a difficult season and more interested in their summer holidays.

'Turkey can use the tournament to restore their image as one of the world's most technically skilled teams'

Turkey also need to change personnel. Many of those who performed so well at the World Cup are close to retirement, but younger players who have done well at foreign clubs, such as Emre Belozoglu at Inter and Nihat Kahveci at Real Sociedad, have begun to under-perform for Turkey. Indeed, Nihat is unlikely to be part of the squad because of Sociedad's League title chase. Gunes could do a lot worse than to use this tournament to blood some of the promising Under-21s.

Turkey have plenty of reason to impress. Their meeting with Brazil, whom they twice ran close at the World Cup, could prove an entertaining revenge match. They also know that they could restore their image as one of the world's most technically skilled teams.

"There is a confusion of generations at the moment," says Gokmen Ozdemir, sports editor of the *Vatan* newspaper. "But this could be a new departure for the team. If they believe the new players are ready, then they can take this Cup."

Suna Erdem

TACTICS

Senol Gunes is likely to stick to the 4-4-2 formation he introduced when he took over the team, with the emphasis on the technically skilful midfield. The inclusion of some younger players, such as Fenerbahce forward Tuncay Sanli and Genclerbirligi defender Deniz Baris could shift the balance, providing a less predictable performance and breathe new life into a team that has fallen into lethargy. Besiktas midfielder Ibrahim Uzulmez could provide some fast, useful runs up the left wing while Galatasaray midfielder Volkan Arslan is likely to be a more energetic, motivated playmaker than the veteran Tugay Kerimoglu.

United States
Arena's alternative

Gold Cup is American priority

WELL, here's a surprise. A coach who thinks the Confederations Cup comes at an awkward moment. US coach Bruce Arena points out that a mere two weeks after the USA play in France, they will participate in the Gold Cup, CONCACAF'S international championship, to be staged in the USA and Mexico.

"It means that we've got to find a way to have two rosters that will allow us to be competitive," says Arena. "For us, the Gold Cup is the more important tournament. But the two coming so close together creates a big problem. Most of our players come from MLS, which is in the middle of its season, and some of our players could be away from their teams for as long as two months."

Asked about the draw, Arena commented: "We have a real tough group. France's group is less tough, but then if I were France, organising a tournament, I'd want my team in the Final, too. We're looking at this as something that will be a good international experience for our players. We won't have the strongest possible team, but we'll be competitive. Our aim, just as it was in Korea, will be to get out of the first round."

Notable absentees will be midfielder John O'Brien ("He needs a rest," says Arena), keepers Kasey Keller and Brad Friedel (both had surgery recently), defender Tony Sanneh (recovering from an injury) and striker Brian McBride (wife expecting a baby). Captain Claudio Reyna, back in training after knee surgery, will probably be held back for the Gold Cup.

'We won't have the strongest team at the tournament, but we'll be competitive'
Bruce Arena

Stalwart figure...Landon Donovan

Paul Gardner

TACTICS

Despite the missing stars, the squad, says Arena, is unlikely to include any new caps. Stalwarts will include Eddie Pope, Pablo Mastroeni, Landon Donovan, DaMarcus Beasley, Clint Mathis, Bobby Convey and Frankie Hejduk. Tim Howard of the MetroStars is the likely goalkeeper, while midfielder Chris Armas, who missed the 2002 World Cup through injury, is again a member of the squad. Arena is also expected to use the tournament to give opportunities to borderline players such as Jovan Kirovski, Greg Vanney and Eddie Lewis.

Keir Radnedge
COMMENTARY

Greatest show...but expansion would reduce the quality

World Cup: less is more

The finals tournament should be slimming down, not expanding to 36 teams

THE World Cup is heading in the wrong direction. It should not be getting bigger, it should be slimming down. Quality has taken a beating from quantity at every tournament since the last 16-strong finals back in Argentina in 1978.

Of course, it is fantasy to believe we will see a return to a tournament of that size. Far more likely is a further expansion when FIFA's executive meets in Paris on the eve of the Confederations Cup Final in late June.

Commercial and financial pressures, combined with political concerns, mean Germany 2006 could feature 36 teams, four more than at the two most recent finals. Indeed, Michel Platini thinks that if FIFA is set on expansion then it should go to 40, as that works better mathematically (it also guarantees more dead games, but who cares, when the commercial contracts have already been set in stone?).

The issue provides another opportunity for FIFA president Sepp Blatter to display his nimble footwork – just as he did in Seoul a year ago, when routing all his critics.

The seeds for the latest scrap were sown in December 2001, at the World Cup draw, when FIFA made the long-overdue decision to guarantee a slot at the finals for Oceania by ending the right of the holders to automatic entry. Then, last December in Madrid, Blatter's executive rebalanced the 32 in a way that meant removing South America's qualifying play-off opening for another finals berth, something CONMEBOL, the South American federation, considered a guaranteed place.

The South Americans went home in a huff and came back with the proposal to expand the finals to 36 – allowing one extra place for South America, a vote-enticing extra two for Europe and another to be settled by an Asia/CONCACAF play-off.

"It's a clever proposal," said Lennart Johansson, who is president of both UEFA and FIFA's World Cup organising committee. "It means no losers, only winners."

I believe Johansson and other traditionalists would oppose the expansion on sporting grounds, but could not deny constituents the right to more places at the finals. Thus UEFA has lukewarmly supported the idea.

However, an expansion to 36 teams is guaranteed to whip up antagonism from the G-14 grouping of leading European clubs.

All CONMEBOL's 10 federation leaders turned up at FIFA House ahead of the executive's discussion to lobby Blatter. They sat opposite him, grinning with satisfaction, at the media conference afterwards, forming an almost sinister phalanx as they made sure that the script was delivered as agreed.

Blatter, originally an apparent opponent of expansion, said: "A majority of the executive committee agreed that to go to 36 teams is a good idea, but the proviso is that we find a formula which fits the time frame. We cannot stretch out the World Cup for ever. It is now up to you gentlemen [the Gang of Ten] to go away and find a system which can make it work."

There is significant opposition to the plan. FIFA's technical and football commissions are against it, as are high-profile personalities such as Franz Beckenbauer (joint president of the German organising committee) and Platini (a member of both the FIFA and UEFA executives).

Two financial snags remain. The first is that all the significant commercial contracts for 2006 have been signed, so there is relatively little to be gained financially. Secondly, the Germans would insist on FIFA footing the bill for the extra organisational and logistical costs.

Certainly, FIFA is dead set against a demand from G-14 for a share in the World Cup profits as compensation for player release. Blatter said: "It's a bad idea. We paid out £90million to the 32 finalists last time. The clubs cannot come to us. If they want to take it up with the national associations, they can do so."

The danger of expansion provoking confrontation with the clubs was clear, however, to Gerhard Mayer-Vorfelder, president of the German federation. He warned: "We must consider carefully how far we dare go without creating a conflict with the clubs. European football is endangered because of the difficulty of balancing club needs."

Maybe CONMEBOL's 10 wise men should offer to meet all the bills.

Football v Euroscepticism?

VARIOUS British newspapers are demanding a referendum so voters can deliver their verdict on the proposed so-called European Union constitution. Most editors want a 'No' vote, of course.

The next question is this: will all sports editors now demand a referendum on whether Britain should pull out of European football? After all, who wants the English, Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish game governed from Switzerland? Some faraway foreign busybodies drawing up the fixtures? To share decisions on the laws of the game with four unelected nominees on a Zurich hillside? Who wants to be beaten every two years in a World Cup or European Championship? To be forced to play European clubs every other week? To watch all those players with funny names and funnier skills? Who wants all that television and sponsorship money?

Answers not needed.

Before the storm...now 1993 European Cup champions Marseille want their French title back

Marseille relaunch 1993 title bid

MARSEILLE want their title back. On the 10th anniversary of their Champions Cup victory over Milan, club president Christophe Bouchet applied to the French federation for the club to be reallocated the right to include the 1993 French League title on their honours list.

A significant body of opinion exists within the European game (and media) which mistakenly believes that Marseille were stripped of their Champions Cup by UEFA because of the proven match-fixing which preceded their 1-0 Final win over Milan in Munich.

Untrue. Marseille were never taken to task by UEFA, although plenty of evidence emerged in time that the club, under millionaire businessman Bernard Tapie, had organised a slush fund operating through bank accounts in Switzerland and Liechtenstein to try to influence referees.

Marseille were nailed by the French federation because the Valenciennes player Jacques Glassmann blew the whistle on Marseille's 'purchase' of the drawn League game between the two sides which preceded the European Final. The point assured Marseille of the French title for the fifth year in a row and cleared the mental decks ahead of the duel with Milan.

Marseille were stripped of the French crown and punished with relegation. Now, it's time to heal the wounds, according to Bouchet, who says: "This is now a different club, run in a different manner, by different people. We have served our sentence."

Olympic football back on the agenda

CHRIS SMITH, Britain's former Culture Secretary, was extremely sniffy about the dangers of politicians becoming involved in London's bid to host the 2012 Olympic Games. He should know...after his crisis-torn ministerial direction of the Wembley fiasco and the 2006 World Cup bid.

Personally, I hope the bid leads the four home associations to hammer out a deal to re-enter the Olympic football tournament. Now that the historic independence of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland is to be confirmed in the new FIFA statutes, there's no serious political reason for shying away any more.

Expenses-free...FIFA boss Blatter

Blatter expense sensation!

THE daily business bulletin *Football Insider* has made an amazing revelation. FIFA president Sepp Blatter does not, apparently, have an expense account. That must make him a unique sort of high-flier.

Football Insider's statement was divined after delving into the Swiss court judgment that quashed the complaint against Blatter by half his executive committee last year.

FI's 'special report' into Blatter's expenses raises more questions than it answers. It is also an attack on Blatter's arch-pursuer, Andrew Jennings, who has made a career out of digging in Swiss dustbins.

Another defeat for Euro sport

AFTER Bosman and Malaja, yet another European Court of Justice verdict has blown up in European sport's face. A Slovak handball player, Maros Kolpak, successfully challenged a German attempt to deny him full employment rights in defiance of an unrestricted employment clause in a European Union agreement of association with Slovakia.

Recent verdicts concerning Malaja, a Polish basketball player, and Kolpak mean that, in theory, the discriminatory policies wielded by most western European football organisations are illegal. The 'but' is that each case will need to be challenged individually in the courts. The time/money equation remains the last line of defence.

Leading figure...Taylor is at the helm of the international players' union, FIFpro, as well as England's PFA

Taylor's taskforce

In an exclusive interview, PFA boss Gordon Taylor talks to Keir Radnedge

HERESY is in the air when you listen to Gordon Taylor. Not that he raises the suggestion or even hints at it. The chief executive of England's Professional Footballers' Association has enough on his plate without fomenting revolution.

But the PFA is one remarkable outfit. After Manchester United, it's probably the most financially successful entity in the English game, and also demonstrates its care for the health of the domestic game by running programmes that should be the province of the Football Association – if Soho Square were not trapped in a dizzying, self-obsessed spin between power games and marketing mayhem.

"Most players come into football hoping the game will be a better place when they eventually have to retire," says Taylor. And that comment sparked the thought in my mind that maybe the wrong people are running the game.

Think back. In the middle of the 19th century, clubs were set up and run by the players. It was the ultimate in sporting self-interest. The great pioneers of organised, codified association football – and the Football Association itself – were players such as even Lord Kinnaird.

Today's worldwide tennis tour is organised under the aegis of the players' association, the ATP. Maybe football should look harder at that model to ensure the money goes where it should. Milan's Portuguese playmaker, Manuel Rui Costa, contributed to the debate almost by accident recently when asked whether he would consider taking a pay cut to help out his poor old club. He replied: "When anyone can show me where all the money in football goes, then I'll happily talk about a pay cut."

Football's organisational tradition is taken for granted. Yet it is illogical in the modern, commercial world. In a twisted way, the players' voice is muted because there is no commensurate employers' organisation to inspire healthy, free-to-air debate about the way the game is run.

FIFA, UEFA and the national associations are all clinging ruthlessly to power within their various spheres. Maybe the whole edifice should be dismantled and built again, maybe from the original players' foundations.

Taylor, in this respect, is a pragmatist. He concentrates on working for change from the inside, leaning on whatever levers of power he can commandeer and then taking spectacular advantage, as he has through the involvement of FIFpro, the international players' union, of which he is president, in first the Bosman case and then the international transfer system dispute.

Ironically, Taylor is further up the FIFA hierarchy than Geoff Thompson, chairman of the FA. Taylor is on what is probably FIFA president Sepp Blatter's favourite panel, the football commission, whose members also include Franz Beckenbauer, Sir Bobby Charlton, Eusebio and Pele. Blatter is famously star-struck but at least he displays a perceived connection with the game notably lacking in a depressingly high percentage of football's political leaders.

Taylor's wry reservation that "sometimes you can be used more than be of use" was doubtless fuelled by events on his latest trip to Zurich when the football commission scorned the idea of a 36-strong World Cup only for the executive to overturn its recommendation 24 hours later.

Taylor's involvement with the PFA began as a subscription-collecting rep during his playing days with Bolton, Birmingham and Bury before, ultimately, he succeeded Derek Dougan as chairman.

Taylor recalls: "When Ron Atkinson left Cambridge for West Bromwich, Cambridge offered me a job as manager. But Cliff Lloyd at the PFA asked if I was interested in taking over as general secretary from him, and that was it."

20-year success story

Taylor has seen the PFA graduate to new offices in a smart business square in Manchester, from its old Corn Exchange HQ, and has led it to become one of the great successes of English football, with staff up from two to 50, and turnover from £100,000 to £20million. He says: "Of course, we are a non-profit-making organisation – but I was taught by Cliff Lloyd to hold something back for a rainy day. Too many clubs have not done that."

But the PFA is not only about survival insurance. It's also about technical standards. "We have our own coaching department with the best coaching advisers in the country," says Taylor proudly, "which incorporates a fast-track system for pros. A lot of Manchester United players have been taking advantage of it like Gary Neville and Roy Keane. Alan Shearer wants to do it, as well as Peter Schmeichel. We have a tailor-made course for them."

Renaissance of a sport

Taylor's reign has coincided with football's incredible journey from being "the pariah of society". He says: "I never dreamed back then that I'd see the day when we had so many football millionaires. When I came in we had clubs collapsing. It's ironic now to see clubs like Fulham, Charlton and Middlesbrough up in the Premier League.

"And it wasn't just the financial thing. We had Bradford and Heysel in 1985, then Hillsborough in 1989, and our clubs were out of Europe for nearly five years.

"The biggest problem was controlling hooliganism, which reached its nadir at Heysel. Everyone – the game, the government, police and local authorities – had to learn to take responsibility and pull together.

"Then, along came the Premier League, Sky satellite television, all-seater stadia, and football, suddenly, became the in thing. Amazing. All on the back of good marketing and Rupert Murdoch deciding that football was the way to save his company – plus England reaching the 1990 World Cup semi-finals, of course."

The never-ending progression may not last much longer, of course. As Taylor says: "We've had another really good season but no one's pretending about what's going on: football's economy was beginning to struggle a bit even before the world economy had a shakedown with September 11 and then the Iraqi war.

"I think about £500m has been lost, for example, in football club shares. It hasn't been the most favoured business sector for obvious reasons, and the collapse of ITV Digital and its effect on the Football League clubs was the final straw.

"Yet a lot of people have made a lot of money out of football clubs in ways which have upset me. The PFA must have visited around 30 clubs where the chairman just disappeared and left us to pick up the pieces. And it was nothing to do with players' wages, despite what you hear.

"If the players hadn't picked up another penny, the way those clubs were being run they'd have still ended up in thousands, even millions, of debt. They had mortgaged the value of players, the ground, season-ticket income, and spent money like it was going out of fashion.

"The ITV Digital collapse was the last straw for many clubs. The Football League clubs had previously been getting £25m for TV, so to go suddenly to £105m was inordinate – and Carlton and Granada soon realised that, and couldn't wait to get out.

"Right now about a quarter of our assets – probably around £5m – is out helping some of those clubs pay their wages. We're not in business to make money, so we are free to use our hardship fund this way to keep people in jobs."

Taylor was not specific but I doubt he entertains serious hopes of the PFA being able to withdraw from its life-saving activities. Like a good Trades Union Congress member, he sees the modern mania for unfettered free-market forces creating an increasingly dangerous and damaging void between rich and poor.

"I once heard [British Foreign Secretary] Jack Straw talking about how an expanding global economy improves standards of living throughout the world. But, of course, that way the bigger nations get richer more quickly, which is why it's no good relying on market forces alone.

"Football's like that in a negative way. The Premier clubs get £20m each from TV, yet there's just a bit more than that in total for all the 72 clubs in the Football League. The figures don't add up.

"That's why the PFA had to fight to maintain our share of the TV income the other year, and it was terrific to see the level of solidarity we had within the game – a ballot return for possible strike action from 93 per cent of our members, voting 99 per cent in favour. And that included those at the peak of the game who stood to benefit the least.

"We shouldn't need to go to those lengths again. We've got a watertight long-term agreement, and people in high places now know the strength of resistance from players – without whom there would be no game. People won't come through the turnstiles to watch directors sitting round boardroom tables."

Just as at domestic level, so it should be at international level after Taylor's progression to his role as president of FIFpro. The international players' union was, for years, considered little more than a cosmetic trick. But Taylor and the PFA have put their commercial acumen into changing all that, aided by the fair-play concerns of the European Commission.

FIFpro held its annual congress in Berlin in December with a record 40-plus ▶

Football background...Mark Palios

The new man at Soho Square

MARK PALIOS is back in football in a far more demanding role than any he ever filled during a decade in midfield for Tranmere Rovers and Crewe Alexandra. Palios, appropriately an expert in business regeneration, is the new chief executive of the English Football Association in succession, in title at least, to Adam Crozier.

Depressingly, the initial 'soundbite' issued on behalf of Palios appeared to say nothing about football. It read: "I am very excited at the prospect of leading the FA. From what I can see, it clearly has talented and committed staff, and loyal and high-quality commercial partners. That's a firm foundation on which to take our business forward."

Palios, 50, may have succeeded the controversial Crozier, but whether he will wield the levers of power with similar autonomy appears unlikely. His appointment will also be dogged, initially, by reports that he was second choice behind Peter Littlewood, a Mars executive who suddenly appeared to lose his taste for the FA.

Adrian Bevington, the FA's head of media relations, refused to compare the powers of executives old and new, saying: "Mark Palios will be responsible to the FA board – as any chief executive answers to his board – and will have responsibility for the running of the FA and its staff."

Those remaining employees will be relieved by an end to seven months of uncertainty accompanied by 60 job cuts among Crozier's 300-strong Soho Square staff, and an allied collapse of morale.

The FA has been headed up since Crozier's departure by legal director Nic Coward and executive director David Davies. They pass back to Palios – as from July 1 – an in-tray stacked with financial problems, and progress reports on both the new Wembley and the National Coaching Centre.

Palios, Birkenhead-born, has a business background. He combined playing 307 League games (55 goals) with Tranmere, Crewe and Tranmere again between 1973 and 1984 with training to be an accountant at Coopers & Lybrand Deloitte in Liverpool. He became a partner at PricewaterhouseCoopers in 1989, and has since specialised in business regeneration. Hopefully, his knowledge of football will also prove useful.

Keir Radnedge

countries present. Taylor says: "In Europe most countries are members. We also had Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Chile and Peru from South America; Japan, Israel and Australia; and South Africa, Nigeria, Algeria, Senegal and Cameroon from Africa."

That is progress in itself. Taylor adds: "Cliff Lloyd had been one of the founders of FIFpro in the 1970s, and it's done very well. It's become a recognised partner in running the game."

Taylor was voted in as president on a four-year term in 2001, doubtless because the PFA has been a role model for other nations in developing its commercial income. "We've put a lot of that expertise into FIFpro," says Taylor. "A major source of income is the electronic game market where you'll see a lot of FIFpro-endorsed games with Sony. That way we've been able to help set up players' unions in other countries. This has been important because they have then developed their own types of bargaining agreement, to sort out local problems arising from the transfer system dispute."

Low point...hooliganism "reached its nadir" at Heysel in 1985

Transfer system involvement

Taylor and FIFpro landed up in the middle of the transfer system negotiations only thanks to raising their profile and proving their mettle in the Bosman case.

"Bosman was the biggest thing to happen to FIFpro," says Taylor. "We supported him both financially and morally because the Belgian situation was so bad. Now we've seen the consequences extended around the world. All the critics said there would be a worldwide football meltdown but it hasn't happened.

"I'm sure, ideally, that FIFA and UEFA and the rest would prefer not to have to take us seriously, but they've had to, because of Bosman.

"Before it came to the European Court, UEFA was talking to us with a view to coming to an agreement – but they never did. They paid the price of being shown up in court, and then had the nerve to say it was the Belgians' fault!

"After Bosman, of course, we became involved in the dispute over the international transfer system because the European Commission had insisted we should be part of any settlement."

Taylor resists the temptation to jump to judgment over whether the new system is a success. He says: "The trouble is, it's like the European Union. Some nations pay lip service to the rules but carry on doing their own thing. The transfer window is an obvious example. There are so many anomalies, it's running on a bit of a wing and a prayer."

'Without the players, there would be no game. People won't come to watch directors sitting round boardroom tables'

Taylor has had to balance varying and sometimes contradictory interests between the PFA and FIFpro. He says: "It's been delicate, sometimes. Not everything would have been flavour of the month in England, for example.

"Here, we had a situation where players had a value, they could be offered the same or better terms, or move, and any compensation had to be settled afterwards. The player always had some sort of a value. But it's not the same now. There's a lot more cavalier treatment of players, particularly with Football League clubs using these monthly contracts."

Perhaps, with his FIFpro experience to the fore, Taylor has some sympathy for FIFA's problem in trying to lay down rules that can work internationally.

"It's a very difficult task, policing common rules throughout the whole of the world, bearing in mind the different economies, laws, standards and cultures. And, of course, you can't overrule national law. But Blatter tries to bob and weave and keep things largely in place.

"It would be good at times if we got more co-operation from FIFA and UEFA so all associations could do the job we do in England, i.e. train players for a career after football, insurance for players retiring early through injury, hardship funds, pensions, health and safety, and severance pay. But everyone has to go at their own pace."

One of Taylor's targets is to enlist European Commission support for collective-bargain agreements between players' unions and representatives of clubs. The industrial landscape is not merely anachronistic, but plainly nonsensical.

As Taylor says: "UEFA doesn't represent the clubs so we've only got G-14 at the moment to talk to. The irony is that since there's no employers' organisation we almost need to create it ourselves so we have someone with whom we can sit around the table regularly – just as the PFA in England sits down with the FA, Premier League and Football League."

Naturally, Taylor keeps a close watch on the political ins and outs within the international governing bodies. He was among the majority surprised by Gerd Aigner's decision to step down as chief executive of UEFA, and wonders about talk of Michel Platini wanting to succeed Lennart Johansson as president.

"It's all about checks and balances," he says. "The European federation is clearly the strongest in the world, it's well organised and efficient. But FIFA is that much more of a global entity and pulls in key votes from around the world so that it can be just as efficient as Europe. You saw that in Seoul last year when Blatter kept the presidency by calling in votes not only from Asia and Africa but from Europe – countries like Italy and Spain and the Eastern bloc.

"England, as usual, backed the wrong horse in Issa Hayatou in spite of me telling them [the FA] well in advance which way it was going.

"But we put all these things behind us and get on with the World Cup and European Championship, and the rest. The game continues to thrive despite, rather than because of, what's going on off the pitch."

That is the observation which must make anyone who loves the game stop and think. Are the men who run the game really the right people? Are the structures right? Just because the FIFA-topped pyramid has been in place for almost a century does not necessarily mean it is the right way to go.

Taylor credits the players as being able to offer the game more than 90 minutes of physical effort on the pitch every few days. Clearly, Zinedine Zidane, Alex Del Piero and David Beckham have no time to play executive director. But nor should they be considered mere crowd candy.

Maybe those marketing groups who envisage supra-national leagues are approaching the game from the wrong direction. Maybe it's time for radical thinking about the way the game is run, and by whom.

Heresy? Not if you look at the achievements of the PFA.

FOOTBALL'S BIGGEST & MOST RESPECTED RESULTS SECTION

WORLDSERVICE

Most appearances...Paolo Maldini made the ESM Team of the Month six times

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ESM XI OF THE SEASON 2002-03

Buffon (Juventus, 2 appearances in ESM Team of the Month); Thuram (Juventus, 3), Puyol (Barcelona, 3), Van Buyten (Marseille, 3), Maldini (Milan, 6); Zidane (Real Madrid, 3), Nedved (Juventus, 5), Roberto Carlos (Real Madrid, 4); Makaay (Deportivo La Coruna, 4), Kezman (PSV, 3), Vieri (Internazionale, 2)

ESM XI APRIL 2003

Toldo (Internazionale, 7 votes); J Zanetti (Internazionale, 3), Nesta (Milan, 4), Roberto Carlos (Real Madrid, 3); Scholes (Manchester United, 3), Zidane (Real Madrid, 6), Nedved (Juventus, 7), Rothen (Monaco, 3); Makaay (Deportivo La Coruna, 3), Ronaldo (Real Madrid, 8), Van Nistelrooy (Manchester United, 6)

ESM XI MAY 2003

Buffon (Juventus, 5 votes); Thuram (Juventus, 8), Nesta (Milan, 4), Maldini (Milan, 7); Seedorf (Milan, 3), Deco (FC Porto, 8), Xabi Alonso (Real Sociedad, 3), Nedved (Juventus, 6); Derlei (FC Porto, 5), Shevchenko (Milan, 5), Kezman (PSV, 3)

ESM XI APRIL 2003 – HOW THEY VOTED

A BOLA (POR)

Toldo (Internazionale); Paulo Ferreira (FC Porto), Chivu (Ajax), Maldini (Milan), Roberto Carlos (Real Madrid); Ronaldinho (PSG), Maniche (FC Porto), Recoba (Internazionale); Larsson (Celtic), Ronaldo (Real Madrid), Inzaghi (Milan)

FOOT MAGAZINE (BLG)

Kahn (Bayern Munich); Sagnol (Bayern Munich), Chivu (Ajax), Maldini (Milan); Nedved (Juventus), Del Piero (Juventus), Zidane (Real Madrid), Rothen (Monaco); Van Nistelrooy (Manchester Utd), Ronaldinho (PSG), Ronaldo (Real Madrid)

SPORT EXPRESS (RUS)

Toldo (Internazionale); Michel Salgado (Real Madrid), Soldo (Stuttgart), Nesta (Milan), Lizarazu (Bayern Munich); Hleb (Stuttgart), Rothen (Monaco), Zidane (Real Madrid), Nedved (Juventus); Viduka (Leeds), Van Nistelrooy (Manchester Utd)

DON BALON (SPA)

Toldo (Internazionale); Zanetti (Internazionale), Nesta (Milan), Zambrotta (Juventus); Paulo Ferreira (FC Porto), Xabi Alonso (Real Sociedad), Zidane (Real Madrid), Nedved (Juventus); Van Nistelrooy (Manchester Utd), Ronaldo (Real Madrid), Makaay (Deportivo La Coruna)

GAZZETTA DELLO SPORT (ITA)

Toldo (Internazionale); Michel Salgado (Real Madrid), Jorge Costa (FC Porto), Valgaeren (Celtic), Lizarazu (Bayern Munich); Makelele (Real Madrid), Davids (Juventus), Nedved (Juventus), Deco (FC Porto); Ronaldo (Real Madrid), Inzaghi (Milan)

VOETBAL INTERNATIONAL (HOL)

Toldo (Internazionale); Michel Salgado (Real Madrid), Nesta (Milan), Zambrotta (Juventus); J Zanetti (Internazionale), Scholes (Manchester Utd), Zidane (Real Madrid), Nedved (Juventus); Ronaldo (Real Madrid), Kezman (PSV), Van Nistelrooy (Manchester Utd)

FANATIK (TUR)

Kahn (Bayern Munich); Thuram (Juventus), Jorge Costa (FC Porto), Lima (Roma); Deco (FC Porto), Volkan (Galatasaray), Scholes (Manchester Utd), Nedved (Juventus); Nihat (Real Sociedad), Makaay (Deportivo La Coruna), Ronaldo (Real Madrid)

KICKER (GER)

Toldo (Internazionale); Ricardo Carvalho (FC Porto), Nesta (Milan), Roberto Carlos (Real Madrid); Scholes (Manchester Utd), Zidane (Real Madrid), Nedved (Juventus), Rothen (Monaco); Kezman (PSV), Van Nistelrooy (Manchester Utd), Ronaldo (Real Madrid)

WORLD SOCCER (UK)

Toldo (Internazionale); J Zanetti (Internazionale), Thuram (Juventus), Maldini (Milan), Roberto Carlos (Real Madrid); Zidane (Real Madrid), Deco (FC Porto), Ronaldinho (PSG); Van Nistelrooy (Manchester Utd), Ronaldo (Real Madrid), Makaay (Deportivo La Coruna)

ESM XI MAY 2003 – HOW THEY VOTED

A BOLA (POR)

Dida (Milan); Thuram (Juventus), Ferrara (Juventus), Maldini (Milan), Kaladze (Milan); Nihat (Real Sociedad), Deco (FC Porto), Seedorf (Milan); Shevchenko (Milan), Larsson (Celtic), Nonda (Monaco)

FOOT MAGAZINE (BLG)

Kahn (Bayern Munich); Nesta (Milan), Nadal (Mallorca), Maldini (Milan); Deco (FC Porto), Beckham (Manchester Utd), Del Piero (Juventus), Nedved (Juventus); Derlei (FC Porto), Kezman (PSV), Ronaldo (Real Madrid)

SPORT EXPRESS (RUS)

Buffon (Juventus); Thuram (Juventus), Donato (Deportivo La Coruna), Nesta (Milan), Roberto Carlos (Real Madrid); Gattuso (Milan), Zidane (Real Madrid), Nedved (Juventus), Pires (Arsenal); Elber (Bayern Munich), Van Nistelrooy (Manchester Utd)

DON BALON (SPA)

Buffon (Juventus); Thuram (Juventus), Ricardo Carvalho (FC Porto), Maldini (Milan); Gattuso (Milan), Xabi Alonso (Real Sociedad), Deco (FC Porto), Nedved (Juventus); Kezman (PSV), Shevchenko (Milan), Nonda (Monaco)

GAZZETTA DELLO SPORT (ITA)

Dida (Milan); Thuram (Juventus), Squillaci (Monaco), Ricardo Carvalho (FC Porto), Maldini (Milan); Zambrotta (Juventus), Xabi Alonso (Real Sociedad), Deco (FC Porto); Derlei (FC Porto), Kezman (PSV), Shevchenko (Milan)

VOETBAL INTERNATIONAL (HOL)

Buffon (Juventus); Thuram (Juventus), Ferrara (Juventus), Maldini (Milan); Seedorf (Milan), Deco (FC Porto), Xabi Alonso (Real Sociedad), Nedved (Juventus); Derlei (FC Porto), Nonda (Monaco), Shevchenko (Milan)

FANATIK (TUR)

Buffon (Juventus); Balde (Celtic), Lucio (Bayer Leverkusen), Thuram (Juventus); Gattuso (Milan), Sergen (Besiktas), Basturk (Bayer Leverkusen), Deco (FC Porto), Nedved (Juventus); Derlei (FC Porto), Del Piero (Juventus)

KICKER (GER)

Buffon (Juventus); Thuram (Juventus), Nesta (Milan), Maldini (Milan); Pires (Arsenal), Deco (FC Porto), Sergen (Besiktas), Balakov (Stuttgart); Larsson (Celtic), Ronaldo (Real Madrid), Derlei (FC Porto)

WORLD SOCCER (UK)

Dida (Milan); Thuram (Juventus), Ferrara (Juventus), Nesta (Milan), Maldini (Milan); Seedorf (Milan), Deco (FC Porto), Nedved (Juventus); Makaay (Deportivo La Coruna), Ronaldo (Real Madrid), Shevchenko (Milan)

INTERNATIONALS

Thursday, April 24

Apr 24 - Amiens, France - friendly
Algeria 3 (Fellahi 26, Belkaid 60, Cherrad 76)
Madagascar 1 (Ruphin pen 78)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 1,000. **Ref:** Garibian (Fra)
Algeria: Ousserir - Zarabi, Zafour, S Zaoui, Brahami (B Daoud 79), Ait Alia (Diss 75), Maouche (Haddou 69), Belkaid, Saifi (Cherrad 62), Ziani (Mansouri 71), Fellahi (Akrour 62).

Saturday, April 26

Apr 26 - Paris - friendly
Mali 2 (Toure 25, Bagayoko 73)
Madagascar 0
HT: 1-0

Sunday, April 27

Apr 27 - Toftir - friendly
Faroe Islands 3 (a Borg pen 17, John Petersen 45, a Lakjuni 49)
Kazakhstan 2 (Lunev 56, Mumanov 76)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 420. **Ref:** Jakobsson (Ice)
Faroe Islands: Knudsen - J Joensen (A Joensen 46), H F Hansen (Danielsen 66), J R Jacobsen (Thorsteinsson 53), Olsen, a Borg (Samuelsen 61), Jann I Petersen, Benjaminsen (J Johnsson 46), a Lakjuni, John Petersen (Frederiksberg 46), Elttor.
Kazakhstan: Novikov - Samchenko (Proskrin 52), Styotkin, Soloshenko (Krotov 59), Mumanov, Lovchev, Skorikh, Kanin (Lunev 46), Kischenko (Mirsabayev 46), Schkihh (Zhumaskaliyev 46), Garkusha. *Sent off: Skorikh 16min.*

Tuesday, April 29

Apr 29 - Torshavn - friendly
Faroe Islands 2 (av Flotum 65, J Johnsson 75)
Kazakhstan 1 (Lovchev pen 6)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 800. **Ref:** Bergmann (Ice)
Faroe Islands: Knudsen - C Jacobsen, H F Hansen (Johannesen 46), J R Jacobsen (Thorsteinsson 46), Olsen, a Borg (Hojsted 46), Benjaminsen (Jann I Petersen 74), J Johnsson, R Jacobsen, John Petersen, av Flotum (Elttor 74).
Kazakhstan: Novikov - Samchenko, Avdeyev, Krotov, Soloshenko, Mumanov, Lovchev, Zhumaskaliyev (Garkusha 86), Mirsabayev, Skorikh, Lunev.

Wednesday, April 30

Apr 30 - Brussels - friendly
Belgium 3 (Sonck 28, Buffel 56, Soetaers 86)
Poland 1 (Krzynowek 81)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 27,000. **Ref:** McDonald (Sco)
Belgium: De Vlieger - De Cock (Deflandre 83), Simons, Valgaeren (Van Buyten 46), P Van der Heyden (Deschacht 87), M Mpenza (Martens 75), Mudingayi, Baseggio (Englebert 87), Goor (Soetaers 83), Buffel, Sonck.
Poland: Liberda - Baszczynski (Jarzebowski 85), Glowacki, Jop, Lasocki (Michal Zewlakow 46), Kosowski (Krzynowek 58), Szymkowiak (Radomski 46), Zajac (Dawidowski 73), Zdebel, Niedzielan, Wichniarek.

Apr 30 - Sofia - friendly
Bulgaria 2 (Berbatov 3, 34)
Albania 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 9,325. **Ref:** Vidlak (Cze)
Bulgaria: Ivankov (Kolev 46) - Kishishev, Kirilov (G Petrov 55), Stoyanov (Krstev 60), I Petkov, Borimirov, Peev, Balakov (Stilian Petrov 8), Dimitrov (Svetoslav Petrov 60), Todorov, Berbatov (Sakaliev 55).
Albania: Becaj (Strakosha 46) - E Beqiri, Cipi (Aliaj 89), Dede (Dalia 90), K Duro (Myrtaj 72), Bellai (Lala 46), Hasi, Dragusha (Murati 46), Skela (Shkembi 85), Rraklli (Bushi 46), Bogdani (Tare 46).

Apr 30 - Santiago - friendly
Chile 1 (Contreras 61)
Costa Rica 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 8,618. **Ref:** Aquino (Par)
Chile: Varas - Alvarez, J Vargas, Contreras, Martel (B Gonzalez 68), J Acuna (Cordova 58), C Acuna (Melendez 46), Tello (Perez 46), Mirosevic, Navia, Pinilla (Soto 52).
Costa Rica: R Gonzalez - Wright, Marin, G Martinez, A Castro (Bennett 70), Vallejos, L Gonzalez, Lopez (Soto 76), Centeno (Chinchilla 86), W Parks (Saborio 15), Bryce (Herron 54).

Apr 30 - Miami, USA - friendly
Colombia 0
Honduras 0
Att: 10,441. **Ref:** Kennedy (USA)
Colombia: Mondragon - Martinez, Mera, Perea, Sinisterra (Ramos 78), Velasquez (Montoya 46), J Restrepo, Montano, Oviedo (Patino 46), Hernandez, Rey (Becerra 46).
Honduras: Medina - W Palacios, M Palacios, Mendoza, Rosales (S Martinez 46; Velasquez 86), Turcios (E Martinez 74), R Morales, Isaula (Ballecilla 82), Cacho, Alvarez, Hernandez. *Sent off: Mendoza 76min.*

Apr 30 - Teplice - friendly
Czech Republic 4 (Rosicky 2, Koller 21, Smicer 27, Baros 38)
Turkey 0
HT: 4-0. **Att:** 14,156. **Ref:** Szabo (Hun)
Czech Rep: Cech (Blazek 46) - Grygera (Fukal 46), Ujfalusi, Bolf, Jankulovski (Tyce 68), Poborsky (Stajner 55), Smicer (Hubschman 74), Gedeon, Rosicky, Koller (Vachousek 55), Baros (T Dosek 68).
Turkey: Rustu (Omer 46) - Fatih Akyel (Servet 84), Deniz (Ibrahim Uzulmez 59), Alpay (Gokdeniz 84), Ergun (Fatih Sonkaya 84), Okan (Bulent 46), Tugay (Volkan 46), Basturk, Hasan Sas (Fatih Tekke 43), Ilhan (Tayfun 27), Hakan Sukur.

Apr 30 - Copenhagen - friendly
Denmark 1 (Gravesen 37)
Ukraine 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 14,599. **Ref:** Mikulski (Pol)
Denmark: Sorensen - Helveg, Henriksen, Laursen, N Jensen, Rommedahl (Michaelsen 46), Gravesen (Kahlenberg 76), C Jensen (Priske 90), Wieghorst, Tomasson (Moller 83), Martin Jorgensen (Schultz 70).
Ukraine: Shutkov - Nesmachnyi, Dmytrulin, Yeserskyi (Popov 66), Tymoshchuk, Voronin (Kalinichenko 72), Kormiltsev (Radchenko 46), Vorobei (Melaschenko 70), Husin (Serebrennikov 80), Shevchenko (Onyschenko 90), Rebrov.

Apr 30 - Helsinki - friendly
Finland 3 (Litmanen pen 55, Forssell 57, Johansson 79)
Iceland 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 4,005. **Ref:** Frojdfeldt (Swe)
Finland: Jaaskelainen (Enckelman 46) - Nylund, Saarinen (Heikkinen 46), Hyypia (Nuorela 63), Kuivasto, Valakari, Nurmela, Ilola (Kopteff 57), Forssell (Hakanpaa 85), Litmanen (Johansson 69), Kolkka (Roiha 72).
Iceland: Arason - Einarsson, L O Sigurdsson (Ingimarsson 46), Hreidarsson, I Sigurdsson, J K Gudjonsson, Gretarsson (B Gunnarsson 56), Vidarsson, R Kristinsson, E Gudjohnsen, Gunnlaugsson (V Gunnarsson 72).

Apr 30 - Saint-Denis - friendly
France 5 (Henry 25, 34, Pires 45, Cisse 62, Kapo 78)
Egypt 0
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 54,554. **Ref:** Busacca (Swi)
France: Barthez - Sagnol, Gallas, Desailly (Mexes 74), Lizarazu, Wiltord (Moreira 70), Pedretti, Dacourt, Pires (Rothen 65), Henry (Kapo 57), Cisse (Silvestre 81).
Egypt: El-Hadary - Ghali (Emam 75), El-Saqqa, El-Tabei, Fathi, H Said, Abdaziz, T El-Sayed (T Said 71), A Hassan (Goda 46), Hamza, Hossam.

Apr 30 - Bremen - friendly
Germany 1 (Kehl 60)
Serbia & Montenegro 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 22,000. **Ref:** De Bleeckere (Blg)
Germany: Rost - Friedrich (Hinkel 66), Baumann, Worns, Hartmann, Freier (Asamoah 72), Ramelow, Kehl, Frings, Bobic (Klose 46), Kuranyi (Lauth 76).
Serbia & Montenegro: Jevric - Vidic, Krstajic, Stefanovic, N Kovacevic (N Brnovic 78), Trobok (Iliev 85), Vukic (Boskovic 73), Malbasa (Markovski 81), Mirkovic (Lazetic 46), Jestrovic (Mijatovic 61), Milosevic.

Apr 30 - Eindhoven - friendly
Holland 1 (Kluivert 27)
Portugal 1 (Simao 78)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 31,500. **Ref:** Meier (Swi)
Holland: Van der Sar - Ricksen (Melchiot 46), F De Boer, Ooijer, Zenden, Van der Meyde (Van Hooijdonk 85), Cocu (Sneijder 46), Davids (Bosvelt 46), Overmars (Robben 75), Kluivert (Van der Vaart 46), Makaay.
Portugal: Ricardo - Miguel, Fernando Couto, Fernando Meira, Rui Jorge, Figo (Hugo Viana 46), Maniche (Sergio Conceicao 46), Rui Costa (Deco 46), Tiago (Luis Loureiro 37), Simao, Pauleta (Nuno Gomes 62).

Apr 30 - Budapest - friendly
Hungary 5 (Gera 18, Szabics 51, 90, Lisztes 61, Kenesei 68)
Luxembourg 1 (Strasser 25)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 1,205. **Ref:** Skomina (Sln)
Hungary: Kiraly (Babos 46) - Salamon, Dragoner (Bodog 49), Juhar, Tokody (Kabat 46), Lisztes (Zavadszky 78), Lipcsei, Gera (Miriuta 46), Low (Fuzi 58), Tokoli (Szabics 46), Kenesei (Toth 73).
Luxembourg: Gillet - Peters, Hoffmann (Posing 75), Schauls, Federspiel, Leweck (Mannon 88), Cardoni, Remy, Strasser, Molitor, Braun (Huss 69).

Apr 30 - Tripoli - friendly
Libya 1 (Taib 65)
Argentina 3 (Saviola 21, Riquelme 66, Aimar 88)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 25,000. **Ref:** Zahmoul (Tun)
Libya: Garzal - Soeaker, Gaid, Maremi, Hamadi, Taib, Tarhoni (Ramsi 84), Montasser (Hossen 72), Tawargi, Gaddafi (Saad 85), Massli (Margani 75).
Argentina: Cavallero - Quiroga, Coloccini, Placente, Castroman (Heinze 46), Cambiasso, Sorin (Riquelme 46), Aimar, Galletti, Saviola (Scaloni 71), Solari (Gallardo 46).

Apr 30 - Vaduz - friendly
Liechtenstein 1 (F Burgmeier 22)
Saudi Arabia 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 1,200. **Ref:** Rogalla (Swi)
Liechtenstein: Jehle - Telser, Hasler, Michael Stocklasa, Gigon (Ospelt 89), Martin Stocklasa, D'Elia, Gerster, F Burgmeier, M Frick (M Beck 60), T Beck.
Saudi Arabia: Al-Antaif - Al-Halwi, Hagawi, Al-Montashari, Al-Kaebari, Kharini, Al-Shahrani (Abushgeer 80), Hawsawi, Al-Kahtani (Basher 72), Al-Meshal, Al-Dosari (Al-Janoubi 57).

Apr 30 - Kaunas - friendly
Lithuania 0
Romania 1 (Bratu 63)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 5,000. **Ref:** Sipailo (Lat)
Lithuania: Stauce - Semberas (Bezykornovas 71), Dedura, Skerla (Dziaukstas 26), Radzius (Gardzijauskas 87), Zvirgzdauskas, Morinas, Cesnauskis (Buitkus 68), Danilevicius, Maciulevicius (Vileniskis 65), Poskus (Guscinas 25).
Romania: Lobont (Stelea 46) - Contra (Tamas 61), Miu, Filipescu, Chivu, Radoi, Rat (Coman 89), D Munteanu, Bratu (Stoica 80), Mutu (Mihalcea 68), Raducanu (Sinmartean 46).

Apr 30 - Guadalajara - friendly
Mexico 0
Brazil 0
Att: 60,000. **Ref:** Ruiz (Col)
Mexico: O Sanchez - Carmona, D Davino, Marquez (Castro 73), Briseno, Valdez (Rergis 75), Pardo (Rubirosa 46), R Morales (Lopez 46), Arellano (Medina 73), Borgetti, Bravo (L Perez 56).
Brazil: Dida - Belletti, Edmilson, Anderson Polga (Luisao 46), Kleberson, Junior (Juninho Pernambucano 64) Ronaldinho, Gilberto Silva (Athirson 64), Ze Roberto (Diego 84), Ronaldo, Amoroso (Emerson Ferreira 64).

Apr 30 - Rabat - friendly
Morocco 0
Ivory Coast 1 (Kalou pen 83)
HT: 0-0

Apr 30 - Lima - friendly
Peru 0
Paraguay 1 (Alvarenga 72)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 17,500. **Ref:** Lopez (Col)
Peru: Delgado - Jorge Soto (Cahuantico 58), Villalta (Galliquio 48), Rebosio, Hidalgo, Jayo, Zegarra, Farfan (Olcese 48), Quinteros (Salas 58), Mendoza (Silva 67), Pizarro.
Paraguay: Tavarelli (Villar 46) - Isasi, Ayala (Maldonado 46), J C Caceres, Da Silva, A Ortiz, Paredes, Britez (V Ortiz 78), Campos, Caballero (Alvarenga 58), Samudio (Lopez 68).

Apr 30 - Dublin - friendly
Rep Ireland 1 (Duff 17)
Norway 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 32,643. **Ref:** McCurry (Sco)
Rep Ireland: Given (Colgan 60) - Carr, Breen, Dunne, Harte (Finnan 60), Holland, Kinsella (Carsley 66), Kilbane (A Quinn 85), Duff (Healy 74), Robbie Keane (Crowe 90), Connolly (Lee 74).
Norway: Olsen (Holtan 46) - Basma (Aas 57), Hangeland, R Johnsen (T Hansen 46), Bergdolmo, Carew, Svindal Larsen, Andersen (F Johnsen 90), Leonhardsen, Iversen (Rudi 66), Rushfeldt (T A Flo 46).

Apr 30 - Glasgow - friendly
Scotland 0
Austria 2 (Kirchler 28, Haas 34)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 12,189. **Ref:** Voliquartz (Den)
Scotland: Gallacher - Wilkie, Pressley, Webster, Devlin (Smith 84), Dailly (Gemmill 46), Burley (Cameron 64), Hutchison (K Miller 62), Naysmith, McFadden, Thompson (Crawford 46).
Austria: Mandl - Scharner, Ehmann, Stranzl, Dospel, Schopp, Aufhauser, Kirchler (Herzog 85), Flogel (Hieblinger 90), Wagner, Haas (Brunmayr 64).

Apr 30 - Zilina - friendly
Slovakia 2 (S Nemeth 13, 87)
Greece 2 (Tsartas pen 13, Choutos 77)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 2,863. **Ref:** Messner (Aut)
Slovakia: Konig (Rzeszoto 46) - Hanek, M Petras, Hlinka (Zabavnik 46), Klimpl (Debnar 46), Janocko (Reiter 83), Karhan (Mintal 71), B Labant, Michalik (Kisel 38), S Nemeth, Bencik (Vittek 46).
Greece: Nikopolidis - Antzas, Dellas, Fissas (Seitaridis 46), Giannakopoulos (Lakis 63), Zagorakis (Basinas 46), Karagounis (Georgiadis 66), Venetidis, Vryzas, Tsartas (Kafes 46), Haristeas (Choutos 66).

Apr 30 - Cape Town - friendly
South Africa 0
Jamaica 0
Att: 18,000. **Ref:** Mususa (Zim)
South Africa: Baloyi - Lekgwathi, M Zwane, Mabizela, Coyle, Sibaya, T Mokoena, Fredericks, Zuma, Manyathela, Nhleko (Seroba 63).
Jamaica: Ricketts - Neil, C Davis, Marshall, Stewart, M Johnson, Daley, J Johnson (Chin-Sue 87), Simpson, Hall, Byfield (Taylor 73).

Apr 30 - Madrid - friendly
Spain 4 (De Pedro 15, Morientes 21, 23, 64)
Ecuador 0
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 35,000. **Ref:** Kvaratskhelia (Geo)
Spain: Canizares (Casillas 77) - Michel Salgado (Gabri 46), Ivan Helguera (Cesar 46), Marchena, Aranzabal (Raul Bravo 46), Xabi Alonso (Sergio 66), Baraja (Guti 66), Joaquin, Valeron, De Pedro, Morientes (Jose Mari 66).
Ecuador: Cevallos - De la Cruz, I Hurtado, Poroso (Espinoza 27), George, Mendez, Chala (Salas 82), M Ayovi, E Tenorio (Kaviedes 27; Asencio 76), A Aguinaga (Sanchez 76), C Tenorio (Fernandez 76).

Apr 30 - Stockholm - friendly
Sweden 1 (Ibrahimovic 33)
Croatia 2 (Olic 6, Zivkovic 58)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 15,109. **Ref:** Van Egmond (Hol)
Sweden: Isaksson - Lucic (Lundqvist 59), Mellberg, Jakobsson (Michael Svensson 59), Edman (C Andersson 67), M Nilsson, M Jonson (Bakircioglu 68), Kallstrom, A Svensson (T Jonsson 78), Allback (Elmander 31), Ibrahimovic.
Croatia: Pletikosa - D Simic (J Leko 46), R Kovac, Simunic, Zivkovic (Babic 71), Tomas, Rosso (Stanic 46), N Kovac (Sma 46), Rapajic (Seric 62), Prso (Mornar 46), Olic (T Maric 77).

Apr 30 - Geneva - friendly
Switzerland 1 (Frei 6)
Italy 2 (Legrottaglie 10, Zanetti 76)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 30,000. **Ref:** Ledentu (Fra)
Switzerland: Stiel - Haas (Berner 46), M Yakin (Zwyssig 69), P Muller (Keller 89), L Magnin (Spycher 60), Celestini, Vogel (Cantaluppi 69), Cabanas, H Yakin, Frei, Chapuisat (Thurre 69).
Italy: Abbiati (Pelizzoli 83) - Panucci, Legrottaglie, Ferrari, Grosso (Oddo 63), Perrotta, Zanetti (Ambrosini 78), Fiore (Tommasi 63), Miccoli (Di Natale 63), Di Vaio (Nervo 84), Corradi.

Apr 30 - Rades - friendly
Tunisia 1 (Braham 45)
Senegal 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 50,000. **Ref:** Benouza (Alg)
Tunisia: Boumnijel - H Trabelsi, Ayari, Jaidi, Badra, Mnari (Bouazizi 58), Nafti, Benachour (Ghodhbane 58), Missaoui, Braham (Zitouni 54), Mhadhebi (Chedly 64).
Senegal: Sylva - Coly, Beye, P M Diop, Diawara (Diatta 46), Diao, Moussa N'Diaye (Niang 46), A Faye (S N'Diaye 74), Fadiga (Diabang 74), Diouf, S Camara.

Apr 30 - Tashkent - friendly
Uzbekistan 1 (Shishelov 43)
Belarus 2 (Shuneiko 15, Kutuzov 55)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 4,000. **Ref:** Kolpakov (Kyr)

Uzbekistan: Poljakov - Ashmuratov, Fyodorov, Koshelev (Jeparov 72), Akopyants, Karpenko (Zeitullayev 75), Shishelov (Tajiyev 67), Shatskikh (Geinrih 72), Soliyev (Kapadze 46), Shirshov, Alikulov (Usmanov 46).
Belarus: Tumilovich (Homutovski 31) - Lukhvich, Gurenko, Ostrovski, Omelyanchuk (Krapkovsky 46), Shtanyuk (Kovba 46), Shuneiko, Lavrik (Milevsky 64), Romaschenko, Khatskevich, Kutuzov (M Tsygalko 67). *Sent off: Romaschenko 76min.*

Apr 30 - San Cristobal - friendly
Venezuela 3 (Arango 30, 38, Noriega 75)
Trinidad & Tobago 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 25,000
Venezuela: Angelucci - H Gonzalez, Rey (Cichero 77), Alvarado, Rojas, M Mea Vitali, Jimenez, Urdaneta (Noriega 51), Paez (G Perez 73), Arango, Moreno (Garcia 61).
Trinidad & Tobago: Fortune - Daniel, Sancho, Thomas, C Gray (A Pierre 72), Carrington, Glenn (Scotland 79), Rahim (Smith 62), Spann (Baptiste 83), Noray (Julien 79), Noel.

Thursday, May 8

May 8 - Houston - friendly
United States 0
Mexico 0
Att: 69,582. **Ref:** Prendergast (Jam)
USA: Howard - Bocanegra, Pope, Califf, Mastroeni (Convey 66), Armas, Beasley, Hejduk (Klein 75), Mathis (Stewart 46), McBride (Jones 79), Donovan.
Mexico: O Sanchez - Carmona, D Davino, Briseno, L Perez (Lopez 66), Altamirano, Arellano (Rubirosa 75), Valdez (C Morales 66), Juan P Rodriguez, Bautista (Arce 82), Bravo (Medina 59).

Friday, May 16

May 16 - friendly
Lesotho 1
Botswana 2

Saturday, May 17

May 17 - friendly
Malawi 0
Zambia 1
HT: 0-0

Wednesday, May 21

May 21 - friendly
Lesotho 0
Malawi 0

May 21 - Kampala - friendly
Uganda 0
Sudan 0

Thursday, May 22

May 22 - Oslo - friendly
Norway 2 (Leonhardsen 22, T A Flo 80)
Finland 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 13,436. **Ref:** Clark (Sco)
Norway: Olsen (E Johnsen 46) - Basma, Lundekvam, R Johnsen, Riise, Iversen (H Flo 46), Andersen (Winsnes 70), E Bakke (F Johnsen 46), Leonhardsen, Solskjaer (Hoseth 86), T A Flo.
Finland: Enckelman - Heikkinen (Nordback 71), Kuivasto, Hyypia, Saarinen (Hietanen 28; Nuorela 50), Pohja (Roiha 46), Koppinen, Valakari, Kopteff, Johansson (Vaisanen 87), Kuqi (Sjolund 82).

May 22 - Durban - friendly
South Africa 1 (B McCarthy pen 18)
England 2 (Southgate 1, Heskey 64)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 48,000. **Ref:** Lim Kee Chong (Mrs)
South Africa: Baloyi - Mabizela, A Mokoena, Radebe, Molefe, T Mokoena (Mendu 69), Sibaya, Fredericks (Mazibuko 77), Buckley, B McCarthy (Manyathela 67), Bartlett.
England: James (Robinson 46) - Mills, Ferdinand (Upson 46), Southgate, P Neville, Beckham (Jenas 51), Gerrard (Barry 82), Scholes (J Cole 75), Sinclair (Lampard 58), Heskey (Vassell 65), Owen.

Saturday, May 24

May 24 - Khartoum - friendly
Sudan 1
Kenya 1
HT: 0-1

Sunday, May 25

May 25 - Gaborone - COSAFA CC, quarter-final
Botswana 1 (Ntshingane 20)
Malawi 1 (Chavula 86)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 25,000. **Ref:** Infante (Moz)
Sent off: Marumo (Botswana) 90min
Malawi 4-1 on pens

May 25 - Kingston - friendly
Jamaica 3 (Lowe 25, J Johnson 40, A Williams 90)
Nigeria 2 (Ugochekwu 66, N Kanu 77)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 25,000. **Ref:** Brizan (T&T)
Jamaica: Ricketts (A Lawrence 46) - C Davis, McDonald, Neil (Sinclair 76), M Johnson, Hyde, J Johnson (Daley 71), Gardner, Whitmore (Stewart 71), A Williams, Lowe.
Nigeria: Rotimi - Sodje, Ekwueme, Usim, C Kanu, Lawal, Ajuwa (Operaku 90), Alagbe, N Kanu, Ugochukwu (Nwosu 66), Goodwin (Dayoatoge 90).

May 25 - friendly
Lesotho 2
Swaziland 1
HT: 0-1

Monday, May 26

May 26 - San Jose - friendly
United States 2 (Donovan pen 41, Lewis 59)
Wales 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 12,282. **Ref:** Archundia (Mex)
USA: Rimando - Vanney, Agoos, Brown, Suarez (Petke 78), Mulrooney, Convey (Ching 75), Lewis, Stewart (Lagos 83), Donovan, Kirovski (Eskandarian 89).
Wales: P Jones (Ward 46) - Vaughan, Melville, Williams, M Jones, Koumas, Pembridge (C Robinson 78), Johnson, Davies, Oster (Pipe 70), Taylor (N Roberts 57). *Sent off: M Jones 48min.*

Tuesday, May 27

May 27 - Edinburgh - friendly
Scotland 1 (Crawford 10)
New Zealand 1 (Nelsen 47)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 10,016. **Ref:** Ingvarsson (Swe)
Scotland: Douglas - Ross (G Alexander 46), Webster, Pressley, Naysmith, Dailly, McNamara (Kerr 83), Devlin, McFadden, Kyle (Gray 60), Crawford.
New Zealand: Utting (Batty 46) - Mulligan (Oughton 46), Zoricich (Smith 70), Lines (Bouckenooghe 80), Burton, Jackson (De Gregorio 54), Nelsen, Coveny, Elliott, Davis, Hickey.

Wednesday, May 28

May 28 - Kampala - friendly
Uganda 3
Tanzania 1
HT: 2-0

Thursday, May 29

May 29 - Avion, France - friendly
Algeria 0
Burkina Faso 1
HT: 0-0

EURO 2004 QUALIFIERS

Group 1

Apr 30 - Palermo, Italy
Israel 2 (Badir 88, Holtzman 90)
Cyprus 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 1,000. **Ref:** Benes (Cze)
Israel: Elimelech - Zano, Afek, Benado, Ben-Haim, Keisi, Banin (Badir 85), Revivo, Torjman (Benayoun 53), Abuksis, Zandberg (Holtzman 66).
Cyprus: N Panayiotou - Konnafis, Germanou, N Nicolaou, Theodotou, C Nicolaou (Yiasoumi 89), Okkas, M Constantinou, Okkarides, Engomitis (C Michael 80), Tomic (Kaiafas 63).

Apr 30 - Valletta
Malta 1 (Michael Mifsud 90)
Slovenia 3 (Zahovic 15, Siljak 37, 57)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 5,000. **Ref:** Hanacsek (Hun)
Malta: Muscat - Ciantar, Vella, Carabott, Said, Dimech, Turner, Giglio (Camenzuli 69), Michael Mifsud, Mallia, Nwoko (Bogdanovic 63).
Slovenia: Simeunovic - Cipot, Karic, Vugdalic, Oslaj (Snofl 61), Sukalo, N Ceh, Siljak (Rakovic 90), Zahovic, Pavlin, Gajser (Koren 78).

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
France	5	5	0	0	19	2	15
Slovenia	4	3	0	1	10	7	9
Israel	4	2	1	1	6	3	7
Cyprus	5	1	1	3	5	10	4
Malta	6	0	0	6	2	20	0

Group 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Norway	4	3	1	0	7	2	10
Denmark	4	2	1	1	9	6	7
Romania	4	2	0	2	12	6	6
Bosnia-Herz	4	2	0	2	4	5	6
Luxembourg	4	0	0	4	0	13	0

Group 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Czech Republic	4	3	1	0	9	1	10
Holland	4	3	1	0	9	2	10
Austria	4	2	0	2	4	7	6
Belarus	4	1	0	3	2	8	3
Moldova	4	0	0	4	2	8	0

Group 4

Apr 30 - Riga
Latvia 3 (Prohorenkovs 10, Bleidelis 21, 75)
San Marino 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 7,500. **Ref:** Byrne (Ire)
Latvia: Kolinko - I N Stepanovs, Zirnis, Zemlinskis, Laizans, Prohorenkovs, Isakovs, Bleidelis (Dobrecovs 85), Verpakovskis (Rimkus 60), Rubins, Miholaps (Stolcers 80).
San Marino: F Gasperoni - C Valentini, Gennari (Moretti 77), S Bacciocchi, Matteoni, Albani, Muccioli (B Gasperoni 90), Michele Marani, P Montagna (De Luigi 66), A Selva, Vannucci.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Latvia	4	3	1	0	5	0	10
Poland	4	2	1	1	7	1	7
Sweden	3	1	2	0	3	2	5
Hungary	4	1	2	1	5	3	5
San Marino	5	0	0	5	0	14	0

Group 5

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Germany	3	2	1	0	5	2	7
Lithuania	5	2	1	2	4	6	7
Scotland	4	2	1	1	6	4	7
Iceland	3	1	0	2	4	4	3
Faroe Islands	3	0	1	2	3	6	1

Group 6

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Spain	4	3	1	0	10	2	10
Ukraine	4	1	3	0	6	4	6
Greece	4	2	0	2	4	4	6
Armenia	4	1	1	2	3	7	4
Northern Ireland	4	0	1	3	0	6	1

Group 7

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
England	4	3	1	0	8	3	10
Turkey	4	3	0	1	10	3	9
Slovakia	4	2	0	2	7	5	6
Macedonia	4	0	2	2	4	7	2
Liechtenstein	4	0	1	3	1	12	1

Group 8

Apr 30 - Andorra La Vella
Andorra 0
Estonia 2 (Zelinski 27, 75)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 500. **Ref:** Aydin (Tur)
Andorra: Koldo - Ayala (Silva 90), Txema, Escura, Fernandez, Sonejee, E Gonzalez, Pujol (Alvarez 80), Jimenez (Lucendo 72), J Sanchez, Ruiz Gonzalez.
Estonia: Poom - Allas, Stepanov, Lemsalu, U Rooba, Reim, Haavistu (Reinumae 69), Kristal, Viikmae (M Rooba 89), Zelinski, Terehhov (Lindpere 56).

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bulgaria	4	3	1	0	6	1	10
Croatia	4	2	1	1	6	2	7
Belgium	4	2	0	2	2	6	6
Estonia	4	1	2	1	2	1	5
Andorra	4	0	0	4	1	7	0

Group 9

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Wales	4	4	0	0	10	1	12
Italy	4	2	1	1	6	3	7
Serbia & M'negro	3	1	2	0	5	3	5
Finland	4	1	0	3	3	6	3
Azerbaijan	5	0	1	4	2	13	1

Group 10

Apr 30 - Tbilisi
Georgia 1 (Asatiani 11)
Russia 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 11,000. **Ref:** Wack (Ger)
Georgia: Lomaia - Khizanishvili, Khizaneishvili, Kaladze, Kvirkvelia (Didava 15), Tskitishvili, Nemsadze, Burduli (Shashiashvili 80), Asatiani, Demetradze, Ashvetia (Aleksidze 84).
Russia: Mandrykin - Nizhegorodov, Ignashevich (Evsikov 14), Smertin, Semak, Aldonin (Sychev 80), Onopko, Alenichev, Titov, Izmailov (Kerzhakov 46), Karyaka.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Switzerland	4	2	2	0	7	3	8
Russia	4	2	0	2	9	7	6
Albania	4	1	2	1	5	6	5
Rep Ireland	4	1	1	2	5	7	4
Georgia	4	1	1	2	3	6	4

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP 2004 QUALIFIERS

Group 4

May 4 - Brazzaville - AfNC qual
Congo 2 (Embingou 6, Owolo 52)
Central African Republic 1 (Makita 84)
HT: 1-0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Congo	3	2	1	0	5	1	7
Burkina Faso	3	1	1	1	2	2	4
Mozambique	3	1	1	1	2	4	4
Cent Af Rep	3	0	1	2	3	5	1

ASIAN CUP 2004 QUALIFIERS

Preliminary round

Group F

In Bhutan

Apr 23
Guam 0
Bhutan 6
HT: 0-2

Apr 25
Guam 0
Mongolia 5
HT: 0-2

Apr 27
Mongolia 0
Bhutan 0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bhutan	2	1	1	0	6	0	4
Mongolia	2	1	1	0	5	0	4
Guam	2	0	0	2	0	11	0

Bhutan qualify for qualifying round

Qualifying round draw

Group A: Uzbekistan, Thailand, Tajikistan, Hong Kong.
Group B: Qatar, Kuwait, Palestine, Singapore.
Group C: Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Indonesia, Bhutan.
Group D: Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, North Korea.
Group E: South Korea, Oman, Vietnam, Nepal.
Group F: Iraq, Bahrain, Malaysia, Myanmar.
Group G: United Arab Emirates, Syria, Turkmenistan, Sri Lanka.
Group winners and runners-up qualify for finals

China (hosts) and Japan (holders) qualify automatically for finals

GOLD CUP 2003 QUALIFIERS

Inter-zone play-off pool

In Fort-de-France, Martinique

Apr 23
Martinique 3 (J Goron 66, Girier-Dufournier 68, Reyal 83)
Trinidad & Tobago 2 (Dwarika pen 13, Scotland 41)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Archundia (Mex)
Martinique: Heurlie - Vaton, Percin, Clorus, Girier-Dufournier, Desprol (Billon 73), J Goron (Reyal 78), Duragrin, Mirande, Borval (Padoly 46), Lagrand.
Trinidad & Tobago: Jack - Thomas, Carrington, M Andrews, Sancho, Gray, Dwarika, Scotland (N Pierre 72), Glen (Rahim 78), Elcock, Spann (Mulraine 72).

Apr 25
Trinidad & Tobago 0
Honduras 2 (Neal 50, Ramirez 89)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Rodriguez Moreno (Mex)
Trinidad & Tobago: Jack - Thomas (Rahim 68), Carrington, Sancho, Gray, Dwarika, Scotland (N Pierre 54), Glen, Elcock, Spann (Mulraine 54), Noel.
Honduras: Medina - Beata, M Palacios, Mendoza, E Martinez (Vallecillo 78), Rosales, Turcios (Oliva 87), Neal (Ramirez 82), R Morales, Alavares, Hernandez.

Apr 27
Martinique 2 (J Goron 48, Padoly 67)
Honduras 4 (Velasquez 31, Ramirez 63, Turcios 73, Hernandez 89)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Rodriguez Moreno (Mex)
Martinique: Go - Vaton, Percin, Girier-Dufournier, Desprol, J Goron, Duragrin, Mirande, Padoly, Lavril (Reyal 80), Lagrand. *Sent off: Desprol 12min.*
Honduras: Medina - Beata (Rosales), M Palacios, Vallecillo, Mendoza, Turcios, Velasquez (Cacho), R Morales, Oliva (Ramirez), Alvares, Hernandez.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Honduras	2	2	0	0	6	2	6
Martinique	2	1	0	1	5	6	3
Trinidad & Tob	2	0	0	2	2	5	0

Honduras and Martinique qualify for finals

Finals schedule

Group A

In Mexico City

13.07.03 .....Mexico v Brazil
15.07.03 .....Brazil v Honduras
17.07.03 .....Honduras v Mexico

Group B

In Miami

13.07.03 .....Jamaica v Colombia
15.07.03 .....Guatemala v Jamaica
17.07.03 .....Colombia v Guatemala

Group C

In Foxboro

12.07.03 .....United States v El Salvador
14.07.03 .....Martinique v United States
16.07.03 .....El Salvador v Martinique

Group D

In Foxboro

12.07.03 .....Costa Rica v Canada
14.07.03 .....Canada v Cuba
16.07.03 .....Cuba v Costa Rica

Quarter-finals

19.07.03 .....Group C 1st v Group D 2nd .....(QF1)*
19.07.03 .....Group D 1st v Group C 2nd .....(QF2)*
Both Foxboro

20.07.03 .....Group A 1st v Group B 2nd .....(QF3)*
Mexico City

20.07.03 .....Group B 1st v Group A 2nd .....(QF4)*
Miami

**United States and Mexico, should they qualify, will compete in QF1 and QF3 respectively, regardless of whether they finish first or second in their group. Pairings will be reconfigured as required*

Semi-finals

23.07.03 .....Winners QF1 v Winners QF4
Miami

24.07.03 .....Winners QF2 v Winners QF3
Mexico City

Third-place play-off

26.07.03 .....*In Miami*

Final

27.07.03 .....*In Mexico City*

EUROPE

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Semi-finals, 1st legs

May 6

Real Madrid (Spa) 2 (Ronaldo 23, Roberto Carlos 73)
Juventus (Ita) 1 (Trezeguet 45)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 78,000. **Ref:** Hauge (Nor)
Real Madrid: Casillas - Michel Salgado, Hierro, Ivan Helguera, Roberto Carlos - Figo, Makelele, Guti, Zidane - Ronaldo (Portillo 50), Morientes (Solari 80).
Juventus: Buffon - Thuram, Ferrara, Iuliano (Pessotto 46), Birindelli - Conte, Tudor (Camoranesi 80), Zambrotta - Nedved (Di Vaio 82), Del Piero - Trezeguet.

May 7

Milan (Ita) 0
Internazionale (Ita) 0
Att: 77,049. **Ref:** Ivanov (Rus)
Milan: Dida - Costacurta, Nesta, Maldini, Kaladze - Brocchi (Serginho 73), Gattuso (Redondo 78), Seedorf - Rui Costa - Shevchenko (Rivaldo 81), Inzaghi.
Inter: Toldo - Cordoba, Materazzi, Cannavaro - J Zanetti, Sergio Conceicao (Guglielminpietro 66), Di Biagio, Emre, Coco (Pasquale 85) - Crespo, Recoba (Kallon 72).

Semi-finals, 2nd legs

May 13

Internazionale 1 (Martins 84)
Milan 1 (Shevchenko 45)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 76,854. **Ref:** Veissiere (Fra)
Agg 1-1. Milan on away goals
Inter: Toldo - Cordoba, Materazzi, Cannavaro - J Zanetti, Sergio Conceicao, C Zanetti, Di Biagio (Dalmat 46), Emre - Crespo (Kallon 71), Recoba (Martins 46).
Milan: Abbiati - Costacurta, Nesta, Maldini, Kaladze - Gattuso, Pirlo (Brocchi 89), Seedorf - Rui Costa (Ambrosini 64) - Shevchenko, Inzaghi (Serginho 80).

May 14

Juventus 3 (Trezeguet 12, Del Piero 43, Nedved 73)
Real Madrid 1 (Zidane 89)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 67,229. **Ref:** Meier (Swi)
Juventus 4-3 on agg
Juventus: Buffon - Thuram, Tudor, Montero, Birindelli (Pessotto 60) - Zambrotta, Tacchinardi, Davids (Conte 89) - Nedved - Del Piero, Trezeguet (Camoranesi 77).
Real Madrid: Casillas - Michel Salgado, Hierro, Ivan Helguera, Roberto Carlos - Flavio Conceicao (Ronaldo 52), Cambiasso (McManaman 76) - Figo, Guti, Zidane - Raul.

ALBANIA

ALBANIA - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
SK Tirana	26	19	3	4	57	18	60
Vllaznia	26	15	4	7	51	32	49
Partizani	26	12	10	4	41	27	46
Teuta	26	12	4	10	38	27	40
Shkumbini	26	11	7	8	33	23	40
Dinamo	26	10	8	8	29	24	38
Flamurtari	26	10	6	10	27	28	36
Elbasani	26	10	6	10	33	35	36
Besa	26	9	9	8	29	37	36
Lushnja	26	9	8	9	27	27	35
Apolonia	26	10	5	11	27	33	35
Erzeni	26	6	6	14	23	37	24
Bylis	26	3	7	16	19	61	16
Beselidhja	26	4	1	21	22	47	13

AUSTRIA

Apr 26: Karnten 4 SV Ried 1; Pasching 2 Sturm Graz 3; Rapid Wien 1 Bregenz 1; Salzburg 0 Admira 0.
Apr 27: Grazer AK 1 Austria Wien 2.
May 3: Austria Wien 0 Karnten 3; SV Ried 0 Pasching 0; Sturm Graz 2 Salzburg 2; Admira 0 Rapid Wien 1.
May 4: Bregenz 2 Grazer AK 1.
May 10: Bregenz 0 Admira 1; Pasching 1 Karnten 1; Rapid Wien 3 SV Ried 2; Salzburg 1 Austria Wien 0.
May 11: Grazer AK 2 Sturm Graz 1.
May 17: Karnten 0 Salzburg 3; SV Ried 1 Grazer AK 3; Sturm Graz 1 Bregenz 1; Admira 1 Pasching 0.
May 18: Austria Wien 0 Rapid Wien 0.
May 24: Bregenz 2 SV Ried 0; Grazer AK 3 Salzburg 3; Pasching 0 Austria Wien 0; Rapid Wien 2 Karnten 1; Admira 2 Sturm Graz 1.
May 29: Austria Wien 0 Bregenz 2; Karnten 1 Grazer AK 2; SV Ried 0 Admira 3; Salzburg 3 Pasching 0; Sturm Graz 0 Rapid Wien 1.

AUSTRIA - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Austria Wien	36	21	7	8	59	28	70
Grazer AK	36	15	12	9	56	39	57
Salzburg	36	15	11	10	51	46	56
Rapid Wien	36	13	12	11	40	38	51
Pasching	36	13	10	13	41	37	49
Sturm Graz	36	14	5	17	50	62	47
Admira	36	11	11	14	36	46	44
Karnten	36	11	8	17	45	57	41
Bregenz	36	9	12	15	48	58	39
SV Ried	36	10	8	18	41	56	38

BELARUS

BELORUSSIAN CUP – Final

May 24
Dinamo Minsk 2 (Tsygalko 53, 58)
Lokomotiv Minsk 0
HT: 0-0

BELGIUM

Friday, April 25

Lierse 1 (Huysegems 56)
Club Brugge 1 (Englebert 71) Att: 10,400

Saturday, April 26

Germinal Beerschot 1 (Quansah 67)
Charleroi 1 (Detal 89) Att: 6,500

La Louviere 1 (Cooreman 90)
Royal Antwerp 1 (Goots 33) Att: 4,500

Mechelen 2 (De Pauw 23, Nijs 43)
Genk 6 (Dagano 1, 75, Daerden 25, Vandenbergh 39, 58, Chatelle 80) Att: 5,000

Westerlo 2 (Brogno 75, Dosunmu 85)
Standard 3 (Arst 55, 76, Vandooren 90) Att: 6,500

Sunday, April 27

Beveren 0
Gent 3 (Schepens 19, Ribus 31, Peeters 73) Att: 4,500

Lokeren 0
Anderlecht 5 (Jestrovic 6, 72, 73, Dindane 41, Seol 67) Att: 10,500

St Truiden 3 (Van Geel 13, Mbonabucya 19, 51)
Mons 4 (Roussel 44, 65, 74, La Placa 89) Att: 7,500

Saturday, May 3

Club Brugge 1 (Englebert 25)
St Truiden 1 (Mbonabucya 84) Att: 27,000

Genk 5 (Skoko 38, Vandenbergh 39, 52, Daerden 58, Dagano 75)
Lierse 2 (Kone 31, Tohoua 90) Att: 24,019

Gent 3 (Peeters 21, Dimbala 37, Ribus 42)
Westerlo 2 (Brogno 10, Delen 12) Att: 9,671

Mouscron 1 (Martic 71)
La Louviere 0 Att: 6,869

Royal Antwerp 3 (Yattara 20, Sergeant 33, Evens 41)
Beveren 1 (Yapi Yapo 21) Att: 4,500

Standard 0
Mechelen 0 Att: 10,000

Sunday, May 4

Anderlecht 4 (Jestrovic 2, 50, De Boeck 32, Dindane 78)
Germinal Beerschot 0 Att: 23,022

Mons 0
Lokeren 0 Att: 4,000

Saturday, May 10

La Louviere 2 (Ishiaku 73, Odemwingie 81)
Charleroi 2 (Eduardo 18, Kolotilko 90) Att: 5,500

Mechelen 1 (Nijs 15)
Gent 0 Att: 5,700

St Truiden 2 (Van Geel 12, Mbonabucya 25)
Lierse 1 (Delorge 46) Att: 8,000

Standard 0
Genk 1 (Chatelle 86) Att: 17,000

Westerlo 2 (Brogno 54, 82)
Royal Antwerp 1 (Sergeant 61) Att: 4,500

Sunday, May 11

Beveren 3 (Theunis 17, Yapi Yapo 49, Zezeto 65)
Mouscron 0 Att: 2,500

Germinal Beerschot 4 (Obodai 44, Mokoena pen 57, Monteyne 85, Thompson 89)
Mons 0 Att: 4,000

Lokeren 2 (Kristinsson 7, Gretarsson 36)
Club Brugge 5 (Ceh 20, Mendoza 72, 74, Martens 85, Saeternes 88) Att: 10,000

Friday, May 16

Royal Antwerp 2 (Sergeant 4, Yattara 78)
Mechelen 0 Att: 7,000

Saturday, May 17

Anderlecht 1 (Jestrovic 18)
La Louviere 0 Att: 23,925

Charleroi 0
Beveren 0 Att: 7,026

Genk 2 (Sonck 67, 75)
St Truiden 2 (Van Geel 47, 87) Att: 24,381

Lierse 2 (Haeldermans 40, De Roeck 90)
Lokeren 1 (Baldvinsson 82) Att: 7,500

Mouscron 0
Westerlo 4 (Delen 4, 12, 62, 85) Att: 6,569

Sunday, May 18

Club Brugge 1 (Martens 5)
Germinal Beerschot 1 (Quansah 7) Att: 22,199

Gent 0
Standard 5 (Goossens 15, 67, Walem 18, Walasiak 19, Vandooren 42) Att: 10,616

Saturday, May 24

Genk 3 (Dagano 44, Sonck 54, Vandenbergh 56)
Gent 1 (Van Hoyweghen 26) Att: 24,434

La Louviere 1 (Diatta 45)
Mons 0 Att: 5,500

Mechelen 3 (De Pauw 6, 37, Valgaerts 87)
Mouscron 2 (Chantry 70, Bakadal 73) Att: 8,100

Westerlo 1 (Dosunmu 38)
Charleroi 1 (Sama 83) Att: 4,500

Sunday, May 25

***Beveren 3** (Zezeto 10, Yapi Yapo 43, Lardenoit 77)
Anderlecht 0 Att: 7,000
**Abandoned after 82mins following pitch invasion by Anderlecht fans*

Germinal Beerschot 1 (Cooreman 61)
Lierse 2 (Tohoua 41, De Wilde 68) Att: 8,000

Lokeren 0
St Truiden 0 Att: 7,000

Standard 1 (Walasiak 42)
Royal Antwerp 3 (Gomez 19, Goots 54, Ljubinkovic 62) Att: 17,000

BELGIUM – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Club Brugge	32	25	4	3	96	33	79
Anderlecht	31	23	2	6	72	28	71
Lokeren	32	18	6	8	69	51	60
Lierse	32	16	8	8	51	41	56
Genk	32	16	7	9	73	52	55
St Truiden	32	16	8	8	63	44	56
Standard	32	14	8	10	53	39	50
Gent	32	15	2	15	49	55	47
Mons	32	13	4	15	45	45	43
Westerlo	32	12	4	16	39	46	40
Beveren	31	11	2	18	47	69	35
Royal Antwerp	32	9	7	16	44	55	34
Mouscron	32	9	5	18	42	72	32
Germinal B	32	8	7	17	49	57	31
La Louviere	32	7	9	16	34	44	30
Charleroi	32	6	9	17	39	66	27
Mechelen	32	4	6	22	18	86	18

Lommel withdrew from League after going into liquidation; all results annulled
**Pending ruling on result of Beveren v Anderlecht match*

TOP GOALSCORERS
24 Wesley Sonck (Genk)
22 Cedric Roussel (Mons)
21 Ole-Martin Arst (Standard)

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Leotar	38	26	7	5	82	27	85
Zeljeznicar	38	24	10	4	66	24	82
Sarajevo	38	19	12	7	83	39	69
Siroki Brijeg	38	21	5	12	69	45	68
Celik	38	16	10	12	61	33	58
Sloboda (Tuzla)	38	16	6	16	51	38	54
Borac	38	16	6	16	50	49	54
Orasje	38	15	9	14	50	57	54
Posusje	38	16	6	16	42	55	54
Zepce	38	14	11	13	49	50	53
Zrinjski	38	17	2	19	46	65	53
Rudar	38	16	4	18	61	57	52
Brotnjo	38	15	7	16	47	55	52
Glasinac	38	16	4	18	37	54	52
Kozara	38	15	6	17	55	62	51
Jedinstvo (Bihac)	38	15	5	18	59	63	50
Velez	38	14	3	21	47	59	45
Mladost	38	11	6	21	40	65	39
Buducnost	38	10	8	20	48	67	38
Bosnia	38	4	1	33	28	107	13

BOSNIAN CUP – Final

1st leg - May 14 - Police stadium, Trebinje
Leotar 0
Zeljeznicar 0
Att: 6,000. **Ref:** Canic

2nd leg - May 27 - Kosevo stadium, Sarajevo
Zeljeznicar 2 (Mesic 13, Gredic pen 32)
Leotar 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 6,500. **Ref:** Panic
Zeljeznicar 2-0 on agg

BULGARIA

Apr 25: Naftex 1 Lovech 3.
Apr 26: CSKA 3 Slavia 1; Rilski Sportist 1 Chernomorets 2; Dobrudzha 1 Cherno More 1; Lokomotiv Plovdiv 5 Marek 0; Lokomotiv Sofia 0 Levski 1; Spartak Varna 2 Botev 0.
May 9: Slavia 2 Lokomotiv Plovdiv 0.
May 10: Levski 1 CSKA 1; Naftex 0 Rilski Sportist 0; Lovech 1 Spartak Varna 0.
May 11: Botev 3 Lokomotiv Sofia 0; Marek 5 Dobrudzha 0; Cherno More 2 Chernomorets 2.
May 17: Rilski Sportist 1 Cherno More 3; Chernomorets 2 Marek 3; Dobrudzha 1 Slavia 2; Lokomotiv Plovdiv 2 Levski 1; CSKA 2 Botev 0; Lokomotiv Sofia 1 Lovech 2; Spartak Varna 1 Naftex 0.
May 24: Spartak Varna 2 Rilski Sportist 1; Naftex 3 Lokomotiv Sofia 0; Lovech 1 CSKA 0; Levski 5 Dobrudzha 0; Slavia 3 Chernomorets 1; Marek 1 Cherno More 1.
May 25: Botev 1 Lokomotiv Plovdiv 2.

BULGARIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
CSKA	25	20	3	2	62	14	63
Levski	25	18	3	4	59	18	57
Lovech	25	17	4	4	48	19	55
Slavia	25	16	3	6	57	26	51
Cherno More	25	13	6	6	38	21	45
Lok Plovdiv*	25	15	2	8	52	31	44
Spartak Varna	25	10	4	11	24	32	34
Naftex	25	10	3	12	29	31	33
Marek	25	8	5	12	33	40	29
Chernomorets	25	7	3	15	31	54	24
Lok Sofia	25	6	4	15	21	36	22
Botev	25	6	3	16	26	58	21
Dobrudzha	25	3	2	20	16	73	11
Rilski Sportist	25	1	5	19	17	60	8

**3pts deducted for failing to fulfil fixture*

BULGARIAN CUP – Final

May 21 - Vasil Levski national stadium, Sofia
Lovech 1 (Hidiouede 89)
Levski 2 (Golovskoy 48, Simonovic 82)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 10,453

CROATIA

Championship play-offs

Apr 26: Zagreb 3 Kamen Ingrad 3; Dinamo 3 Cibalia 0.
Apr 27: Hajduk 1 Varteks 0.
May 3: Varteks 3 Zagreb 1; Cibalia 1 Hajduk 1; Kamen Ingrad 0 Dinamo 2.
May 7: Zagreb 1 Dinamo 3; Kamen Ingrad 1 Hajduk 0; Cibalia 1 Varteks 2.
May 10: Cibalia 2 Zagreb 1; Varteks 1 Kamen Ingrad 1.
May 11: Hajduk 4 Dinamo 1.
May 17: Zagreb 3 Hajduk 1; Dinamo 5 Varteks 1; Kamen Ingrad 2 Cibalia 0.
May 24: Kamen Ingrad 1 Zagreb 0; Cibalia 3 Dinamo 2; Varteks 2 Hajduk 2.

CROATIA – CHAMP'SHIP PLAY-OFFS

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dinamo	31	24	3	4	75	27	75
Hajduk	31	21	4	6	55	22	67
Varteks	31	18	2	11	50	36	56
Kamen Ingrad	31	11	10	9	34	33	44
Cibalia	31	12	7	12	39	43	43
Zagreb	31	9	8	14	38	50	35

Teams carried forward all points and goals from regular season

CROATIAN CUP – Final

1st leg - May 21 - Gradski stadium, Pula
Uljanik 0
Hajduk 1 (Bule 50)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 7,500. **Ref:** Siric

CYPRUS

CYPRUS – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Omonia	26	18	6	2	68	22	60
Anorthosis	26	19	2	5	65	30	59
APOEL	26	16	7	3	55	24	55
Olympiakos	26	16	4	6	56	29	52
AEL	26	11	6	9	56	45	39
Ethnikos Achnas	26	10	7	9	35	32	37
AEP	26	11	4	11	38	45	37
AEK	26	9	5	12	43	50	32
Digenis	26	9	4	13	40	40	31
ENP	26	8	7	11	39	40	31
Apollon	26	8	7	11	42	46	31
Nea Salamina	26	6	11	9	39	40	29
Aris	26	2	3	21	31	92	9
Alki	26	1	3	22	21	93	6

CYPRIOT CUP – Final

May 17 - GSP stadium, Nicosia
Anorthosis 0
AEL 0
Aet. Anorthosis 5-3 on pens

CZECH REPUBLIC

Apr 26: Bohemians 1 Jablonec 1; Ceske Budejovice 0 Chmel Blsany 0; Sparta 2 Hradec Kralove 0; Teplice 1 Zlin 2; Olomouc 0 Pribram 0; Brno 1 Ostrava 0; Liberec 0 Slavia 0.
Apr 27: Synot 1 Zizkov 2.
May 3: Zizkov 2 Sparta 0.
May 4: Olomouc 3 Bohemians 1; Chmel Blsany 1 Liberec 1; Pribram 2 Teplice 1; Jablonec 1 Ceske Budejovice 0; Zlin 3 Synot 0; Hradec Kralove 0 Brno 1.
May 5: Slavia 7 Ostrava 0.
May 10: Brno 0 Slavia 0.
May 11: Sparta 2 Jablonec 0; Ostrava 3 Chmel Blsany 1; Synot 5 Hradec Kralove 0; Ceske Budejovice 1 Zlin 2; Bohemians 0 Pribram 0; Teplice 3 Olomouc 1.
May 12: Liberec 0 Zizkov 0.
May 18: Zizkov 1 Brno 1; Jablonec 0 Teplice 0; Olomouc 4 Ceske Budejovice 2; Pribram 0 Synot 0; Hradec Kralove 1 Ostrava 1; Chmel Blsany 1 Slavia 2.
May 19: Zlin 1 Liberec 1.
May 25: Ostrava 2 Jablonec 0; Synot 2 Chmel Blsany 2; Liberec 3 Hradec Kralove 1; Brno 5 Zlin 0; Ceske Budejovice 1 Pribram 1; Sparta 1 Olomouc 1; Teplice 0 Bohemians 1; Slavia 3 Zizkov 0.

CZECH REPUBLIC

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sparta	29	20	5	4	50	15	65
Slavia	29	17	10	2	63	19	61
Liberec	29	14	7	8	42	35	49
Zizkov	29	14	7	8	37	32	49
Ostrava	29	13	5	11	40	37	44
Teplice	29	12	6	11	32	32	42
Brno	29	10	9	10	34	27	39
Zlin	29	10	9	10	32	40	39
Pribram	29	9	11	9	33	29	38
Synot	29	10	7	12	37	39	37
Olomouc	29	8	10	11	29	31	34
Jablonec	29	6	13	10	25	38	31
Ceske Budejovice	29	8	6	15	35	52	30
Chmel Blsany	29	7	7	15	28	38	28
Bohemians	29	5	9	15	33	54	24
Hradec Kralove	29	2	13	14	21	53	19

CZECH CUP – Final

May 27 - Prague
Jablonec 0
Teplice 1 (Hunal 32)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 5,833. **Ref:** Pucek

DENMARK

Apr 24: Farum 2 AGF 0.
Apr 26: Koge 0 FC Copenhagen 5.
Apr 27: Brondby 3 Midtjylland 1; AB 3 AaB 1; OB 1 Esbjerg 1; Silkeborg 5 Farum 1; Viborg 0 AGF 0.
May 3: Esbjerg 1 Brondby 2.
May 4: AaB 2 Viborg 3; Farum 2 Koge 1; Midtjylland 2 Silkeborg 1; FC Copenhagen 1 AB 1; AGF 4 OB 1.
May 10: Farum 0 FC Copenhagen 1.
May 11: Brondby 1 AGF 1; Koge 1 Midtjylland 1; OB 3 AaB 1; Silkeborg 2 Esbjerg 2; Viborg 3 AB 0.
May 17: AB 1 OB 1.
May 18: Esbjerg 6 Koge 1; Midtjylland 2 Farum 0; FC Copenhagen 2 Viborg 3; AGF 2 Silkeborg 1; AaB 1 Brondby 2.
May 24: Midtjylland 1 FC Copenhagen 2.
May 25: Brondby 0 AB 0; Farum 2 Esbjerg 3; Koge 1 AGF 4; OB 3 Viborg 1; Silkeborg 0 AaB 0.

DENMARK

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
FC Copenhagen	29	15	8	6	45	30	53
Brondby	29	14	10	5	53	29	52
Farum	29	14	2	13	43	52	44
Midtjylland	29	11	9	9	44	36	42
Esbjerg	29	11	9	9	60	54	42
OB	29	10	11	8	48	41	41
AGF	29	10	7	12	44	51	37
Viborg	29	9	9	11	48	50	36
AB	29	8	11	10	34	40	35
AaB	29	10	4	15	36	44	34
Silkeborg	29	8	9	12	42	41	33
Koge	29	8	3	18	41	70	27

DANISH CUP – Final

May 29 - Parken, Copenhagen
Brondby 3 (Dalgas 38, Bagger 84, Jorgensen 90)
Midtjylland 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 32,660. **Ref:** Laursen

ENGLAND

Saturday, April 26

Birmingham 3 (Dugarry 18, Clemence 40, Lazaridis 80)
Middlesbrough 0 Att: 28,821

Bolton 2 (Djorkaeff 74, Keown og 84)
Arsenal 2 (Wiltord 47, Pires 56) Att: 27,253

Charlton 2 (Parker 32, Lisbie 50)
Southampton 1 (Beattie 90) Att: 25,894

Chelsea 1 (Goma og 39)
Fulham 1 (Boa Morte 66) Att: 40,792

Everton 2 (Campbell 59, Rooney 90)
Aston Villa 1 (Allback 49) Att: 40,167

Leeds 2 (Viduka 21, Smith 90)
Blackburn 3 (Dunn pen 38, Cole 69, Todd 78) Att: 38,062

Sunderland 0
Newcastle 1 (Solano pen 43) Att: 45,067

West Brom 0
Liverpool 6 (Owen 15, 49, 61, 67, Baros 47, 84) Att: 27,182

Sunday, April 27

Manchester City 0
West Ham 1 (Kanoute 81) Att: 34,815

Tottenham 0
Manchester Utd 2 (Scholes 69, Van Nistelrooy 90) Att: 36,073

Saturday, May 3

Aston Villa 1 (Allback 80)
Sunderland 0 Att: 36,963

Blackburn 1 (Duff 11)
West Brom 1 (Koumas 54) Att: 27,470

Fulham 2 (Stubbs og 34, Wright og 43)
Everton 0 Att: 18,385

Liverpool 1 (Baros 59)
Manchester City 2 (Anelka pen 74, 90) Att: 44,220

Manchester Utd 4 (Beckham 11, Van Nistelrooy 32, 37, 53)
Charlton 1 (Jensen 12) Att: 67,721

Middlesbrough 5 (Christie 25, Juninho 26, Nemeth 28, Maccarone 51, 75)
Tottenham 1 (Redknapp 60) Att: 30,230

Newcastle 1 (Hugo Viana 42)
Birmingham 0 Att: 52,146

Southampton 0
Bolton 0 Att: 30,951

West Ham 1 (Di Canio 71)
Chelsea 0 Att: 35,042

Sunday, May 4

Arsenal 2 (Henry 31, Bergkamp 63)
Leeds 3 (Kewell 5, Harte 48, Viduka 88) Att: 38,127

Wednesday, May 7

Arsenal 6 (Pires 9, 23, 47, Pennant 16, 19, 26)
Southampton 1 (Tessem 35) Att: 38,052

Sunday, May 11

Birmingham 2 (Horsfield 79, John 88)
West Ham 2 (Ferdinand 66, Di Canio 89) Att: 29,505

Bolton 2 (Frandsen 10, Okocha 21)
Middlesbrough 1 (Ricketts 61) Att: 27,241

Charlton 0
Fulham 1 (Saha pen 33) Att: 26,108

Chelsea 2 (Desailly 14, Gronkjaer 27)
Liverpool 1 (Hyypia 11) Att: 41,911

Everton 1 (Campbell 8)
Manchester Utd 2 (Beckham 43, Van Nistelrooy pen 78) Att: 40,168

Leeds 3 (Harte 8, Barmby 81, Viduka 90)
Aston Villa 1 (Gudjonsson 40) Att: 40,205

Manchester City 0
Southampton 1 (M Svensson 34) Att: 34,957

Sunderland 0
Arsenal 4 (Henry 7, Ljungberg 39, 78, 88) Att: 40,188

Tottenham 0
Blackburn 4 (Yorke 5, Hignett 45, Duff 48, Cole 62) Att: 36,036

West Brom 2 (Dobie 57, 72)
Newcastle 2 (Jenas 43, Hugo Viana 80) Att: 27,036

ENGLAND – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Man Utd	38	25	8	5	74	34	83
Arsenal	38	23	9	6	85	42	78
Newcastle	38	21	6	11	63	48	69
Chelsea	38	19	10	9	68	38	67
Liverpool	38	18	10	10	61	41	64
Blackburn	38	16	12	10	52	43	60
Everton	38	17	8	13	48	49	59
Southampton	38	13	13	12	43	46	52
Man City	38	15	6	17	47	54	51
Tottenham	38	14	8	16	51	62	50
Middlesbrough	38	13	10	15	48	44	49
Charlton	38	14	7	17	45	56	49
Birmingham	38	13	9	16	41	49	48
Fulham	38	13	9	16	41	50	48
Leeds	38	14	5	19	58	57	47
Aston Villa	38	12	9	17	42	47	45
Bolton	38	10	14	14	41	51	44
West Ham	38	10	12	16	42	59	42
West Brom	38	6	8	24	29	65	26
Sunderland	38	4	7	27	21	65	19

TOP GOALSCORERS
25 Ruud Van Nistelrooy (Manchester Utd)
24 Thierry Henry (Arsenal)
23 James Beattie (Southampton)
20 Mark Viduka (Leeds)
19 Michael Owen (Liverpool)

FA CUP – Final

May 17 - Millennium stadium, Cardiff
Arsenal 1 (Pires 38)
Southampton 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 73,726. **Ref:** Barber

ESTONIA

ESTONIAN CUP – Final

May 27 - Kadriorg stadium, Tallinn
Tallinna VMK 2 (Smirnov 32, Krolov 78)
Flora Tallinn 2 (Stepanov 36, Sirevicius 69)
Aet. **HT:** 1-1. **90mins:** 2-2. **Ref:** Kotter
Tallinna VMK 4-1 on pens

FRANCE

Saturday, May 3

Bordeaux 0
Auxerre 1 (Cisse 75) Att: 32,384

Guingamp 1 (Malouda 17)
Lens 0 Att: 16,673

Le Havre 0
Ajaccio 1 (Rodriguez 76) Att: 13,148

Lille 1 (Sterjovski 31)
Rennes 0 Att: 17,177

Marseille 2 (Sychev 45, Van Buyten 87)
Bastia 1 (Batlles 90) Att: 56,000

Montpellier 1 (Mansare pen 29)
Nantes 0 Att: 13,731

Nice 0
Sedan 0 Att: 16,560

Strasbourg 0
Lyon 4 (Anderson 4, Carriere 60, Luyindula 66, Violeau 79) Att: 20,467

Troyes 0
Sochaux 2 (Monsoreau 49, Frau 62) Att: 11,597

Sunday, May 4

Paris SG 2 (Fiorese 58, Ronaldinho pen 76)
Monaco 1 (Nonda 39) Att: 46,000

Saturday, May 10

Ajaccio 2 (Seck 7, Bezzaz 81)
Nice 0 Att: 6,500

Auxerre 0
Lille 0 Att: 11,500

Bordeaux 2 (Pauleta 8, Darcheville 45)
Le Havre 0 Att: 26,824

Lens 1 (Moreira 82)
Troyes 0 Att: 37,703

Monaco 3 (Nonda 54, 86, Prso 74)
Montpellier 1 (Assoumani 50) Att: 8,000

Nantes 0
Guingamp 4 (Le Roux pen 22, 41, Carnot 48, Drogba pen 54) Att: 34,919

Rennes 2 (Arribage 23, Devaux og 76)
Strasbourg 3 (Cech og 8, Martins 72, Ljuboja 85) Att: 18,302

Sedan 2 (Noro 39, 77)
Bastia 2 (Batlles 9, Maurice pen 36) Att: 21,982

Sochaux 3 (Santos 28, Frau 65, Isabey 86)
Marseille 0 Att: 19,910

Sunday, May 11

Lyon 1 (Anderson 25)
Paris SG 0 Att: 37,823

Tuesday, May 20

Bastia 2 (Laslandes 18, 61)
Sochaux 2 (Pagis pen 6, Frau 32) Att: 7,943

Guingamp 3 (Carnot 23, 51, Malouda 90)
Monaco 1 (Nonda 56) Att: 18,001

Le Havre 1 (Ciechielski 66)
Lens 3 (Sibierski 8, Diop 87, Bakari 90) Att: 13,583

Lille 2 (Delpierre 60, Sterjovski 70)
Ajaccio 0 Att: 16,729

Marseille 4 (S Perez 10, Chapuis 42, Hemdani 82, Sakho 90)
Sedan 2 (N'Diefi 56, S Perez og 60) Att: 50,593

Montpellier 1 (Bamogo 14)
Lyon 1 (Juninho 28) Att: 19,764

Nice 1 (Roy 14)
Bordeaux 1 (Chamakh 88) Att: 17,000

Paris SG 0
Rennes 0 Att: 37,052

Strasbourg 1 (Martins 17)
Auxerre 2 (Lachuer 45, Kapo 68) Att: 14,932

Troyes 2 (Nade 51, Akrour 70)
Nantes 0 Att: 10,976

Saturday, May 24

Ajaccio 0
Strasbourg 0 Att: 6,500

Auxerre 2 (Kapo 9, 28)
Paris SG 0 Att: 15,000

Bordeaux 2 (Pauleta 14, pen 90)
Lille 0 Att: 28,695

Le Havre 2 (Le Tallec 26, Sinama-Pongolle 90)
Nice 1 (Diawara 78) Att: 13,841

Lens 2 (Sibierski 30, Bakari 75)
Bastia 0 Att: 37,998

Lyon 1 (Govou 66)
Guingamp 4 (Drogba 18, 67, Malouda 20, 47) Att: 40,152

Monaco 6 (Prso 4, 20, Nonda 12, 89, 90, Rothen 82)
Troyes 0 Att: 5,000

Nantes 1 (Quint 82)
Marseille 0 Att: 36,411

Rennes 3 (Monterrubio 6, 48, Piquionne 68)
Montpellier 1 (Diatta og 19) Att: 18,237

Sochaux 2 (Pedretti 20, Santos 77)
Sedan 1 (H Camara pen 67) Att: 19,078

FRANCE – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Lyon	38	19	11	8	63	41	68
Monaco	38	19	10	9	66	33	67
Marseille	38	19	8	11	41	36	65
Bordeaux	38	18	10	10	57	36	64
Sochaux	38	17	13	8	46	31	64
Auxerre	38	18	10	10	38	29	64
Guingamp	38	19	5	14	59	46	62
Lens	38	14	15	9	43	31	57
Nantes	38	16	8	14	37	39	56
Nice	38	13	16	9	39	31	55
Paris SG	38	14	12	12	47	36	54
Bastia	38	12	11	15	40	48	47
Strasbourg	38	11	12	15	40	54	45
Lille	38	10	12	16	29	44	42
Rennes	38	10	10	18	35	45	40
Montpellier	38	10	10	18	37	54	40
Ajaccio	38	9	12	17	29	49	39
Le Havre	38	10	8	20	27	47	38
Sedan	38	9	9	20	41	59	36
Troyes	38	7	10	21	23	48	31

TOP GOALSCORERS
26 Shabani Nonda (Monaco)
23 Pauleta (Bordeaux)
17 Didier Drogba (Guingamp)
14 Henri Camara (Sedan)
14 Djibril Cisse (Auxerre)
13 Juninho Pernambucano (Lyon)

FRENCH CUP – semi-finals

Apr 26: Auxerre 2 Rennes 1.
Apr 27: Paris SG 2 Bordeaux 0.

LEAGUE CUP – Final

May 17 - Stade de France, Saint-Denis
Sochaux 1 (Saveljic pen 88)
Monaco 4 (Giuly 57, 77, Squillaci 61, Prso 67)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 75,379. **Ref:** Ledentu

GERMANY

Saturday, April 26

Hamburg 4 (Fukal 36, Romeo 44, Mahdavikia 55, Takahara 77)
Nurnberg 0 Att: 41,000

Hertha 2 (Luizao 10, Marcelinho pen 44)
Hannover 0 Att: 41,000

Monchengladbach 2 (Demo 6, Van Lent 89)
Bayer Leverkusen 2 (Bierofka 17, Berbatov 48) Att: 34,000

1860 Munich 0
Borussia Dortmund 0 Att: 30,000

Schalke 1 (Varela 29)
Bochum 2 (Christiansen 25, Buckley 90) Att: 60,886

Stuttgart 1 (Meissner 27)
Hansa Rostock 1 (Hill 59) Att: 23,000

Wolfsburg 0
Bayern Munich 2 (Elber 59, Pizarro 83) Att: 30,000

Sunday, April 27

Arminia Bielefeld 1 (Dabrowski 56)
Energie Cottbus 2 (Gebhardt 1, 40) Att: 20,000

Kaiserslautern 1 (Klose pen 66)
Werder Bremen 0 Att: 40,000

Saturday, May 3

Bayern Munich 1 (Kuffour 85)
Kaiserslautern 0 Att: 63,000

Bochum 1 (Christiansen 20)
Monchengladbach 1 (Forssell 19) Att: 32,645

Borussia Dortmund 2 (Ricken 16, Rosicky 67)
Wolfsburg 2 (Thiam 59, 62) Att: 68,600

Energie Cottbus 0
Hamburg 0 Att: 12,448

Hannover 1 (Kaufman 85)
Stuttgart 2 (Dundee 19, 37) Att: 30,724

Nurnberg 1 (Driller 1)
1860 Munich 2 (Lauth 56, 73) Att: 35,558

Werder Bremen 4 (Krstajic 24, Magnin 27, Haristeas 36, 76)
Hertha 2 (Friedrich 21, Marx 79) Att: 35,000

Sunday, May 4

Bayer Leverkusen 3 (Lucio 38, 69, Balitsch 71)
Arminia Bielefeld 1 (Brinkmann 34) Att: 22,500

Hansa Rostock 3 (Prica 65, Arvidsson 79, Rydlewicz 84)
Schalke 1 (Varela 17) Att: 25,000

Saturday, May 10

Borussia Dortmund 4 (Ricken 27, 54, Reina 65, Koller 68)
Nurnberg 1 (Ciric 89) Att: 67,600

Hamburg 4 (Barbarez 18, Romeo 55, Meijer 89, Jacobsen 90)
Bayer Leverkusen 1 (Balitsch 88) Att: 51,629

Hertha 3 (Ballack og 5, Marcelinho pen 59, 88)
Bayern Munich 6 (Elber 19, 33, 45, Pizarro 22, 23, Ballack 85) Att: 59,200

Monchengladbach 3 (Demo 37, Forssell 63, Skoubo 77)
Hansa Rostock 0 Att: 31,300

1860 Munich 3 (Shao 5, Schroth 33, 65)
Energie Cottbus 0 Att: 18,500

Stuttgart 0
Werder Bremen 1 (Marques og 51) Att: 51,000

Wolfsburg 2 (Maric 19, 57)
Kaiserslautern 2 (Sforza 5, Mifsud 69) Att: 21,136

Sunday, May 11

Arminia Bielefeld 1 (Wichniarek 42)
Bochum 3 (Freier 23, Christiansen 71, Buckley 90) Att: 24,408

Schalke 0
Hannover 2 (Krupnikovic 60, Stajner 73) Att: 60,886

Saturday, May 17

Bayer Leverkusen 3 (Bierofka 8, Berbatov 44, Babic 48)
1860 Munich 0 Att: 22,500

Bayern Munich 2 (Elber 46, 76)
Stuttgart 1 (Dundee 82) Att: 63,000

Bochum 1 (Christiansen 31)
Hamburg 1 (Rahn 82) Att: 32,600

Energie Cottbus 2 (Topic 13, Juskowiak 74)
Nurnberg 1 (Krzynowek 22) Att: 12,000

Hannover 2 (Krupnikovic 10, Stajner 90)
Monchengladbach 2 (Forssell 62, Asanin 66) Att: 31,900

Hansa Rostock 3 (Aduobe 8, Vorbeck 56, Di Salvo 86)
Arminia Bielefeld 0 Att: 28,000

Kaiserslautern 0
Borussia Dortmund 0 Att: 40,200

Werder Bremen 2 (Haristeas 22, Micoud 57)
Schalke 1 (Agali 36) Att: 38,000

Wolfsburg 2 (Maric pen 5, Munteanu 58)
Hertha 0 Att: 24,000

Saturday, May 24

Arminia Bielefeld 0
Hannover 1 (Casey 85) Att: 26,601

Borussia Dortmund 1 (Rosicky 26)
Energie Cottbus 1 (Rost 75) Att: 68,000

Hamburg 2 (Cardoso 45, Romeo 53)
Hansa Rostock 0 Att: 55,500

Hertha 2 (Rafael 45, 84)
Kaiserslautern 0 Att: 50,580

Monchengladbach 4 (Kluge 61, Skoubo 73, 76, Forssell 90)
Werder Bremen 1 (Korzynietz og 84) Att: 34,500

1860 Munich 2 (Stranzl 37, Max 78)
Bochum 4 (Freier 1, Hashemian 64, Christiansen 73, Reis 89) Att: 25,000

Nurnberg 0
Bayer Leverkusen 1 (Basturk 36) Att: 31,182

Schalke 1 (Oude Kamphuis 39)
Bayern Munich 0 Att: 60,886

Stuttgart 2 (Kuranyi 11, Balakov 23)
Wolfsburg 0 Att: 49,000

GERMANY – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bayern Munich	34	23	6	5	70	25	75
Stuttgart	34	17	8	9	53	39	59
B Dortmund	34	15	13	6	51	27	58
Hamburg	34	15	11	8	46	36	56
Hertha	34	16	6	12	52	43	54
Werder Bremen	34	16	4	14	51	50	52
Schalke	34	12	13	9	46	40	49
Wolfsburg	34	13	7	14	39	42	46
Bochum	34	12	9	13	55	56	45
1860 Munich	34	12	9	13	44	52	45
Hannover	34	12	7	15	47	57	43
M'gladbach	34	11	9	14	43	45	42
Hansa Rostock	34	11	8	15	35	41	41
Kaiserslautern	34	10	10	14	40	42	40
B Leverkusen	34	11	7	16	47	56	40
Arminia Bielefeld	34	8	12	14	35	46	36
Nurnberg	34	8	6	20	33	60	30
Energie Cottbus	34	7	9	18	34	64	30

TOP GOALSCORERS
21 Thomas Christiansen (Bochum)
21 Giovane Elber (Bayern Munich)
16 Ailton (Werder Bremen)
15 Kevin Kuranyi (Stuttgart)
15 Claudio Pizarro (Bayern Munich)

GREECE

May 3: AEK 4 Aris 0; PAOK 3 Panionios 0.
May 4: Ionikos 2 Iraklis 4; Xanthi 3 Kallithea 0; Panathinaikos 5 OFI 1; Proodeftiki 1 Panahaiki 0; Giannina 0 Olympiakos 3; Aigaleo 3 Akratitos 1.
May 10: OFI 2 Xanthi 0; Panionios 2 Proodeftiki 0.
May 11: Olympiakos 3 Panathinaikos 0; Iraklis 2 Kallithea 1; Aris 2 Ionikos 0; Panahaiki 0 AEK 2; Akratitos 3 Giannina 0; Aigaleo 2 PAOK 3.
May 24: Aris 2 Iraklis 1; Proodeftiki 1 Aigaleo 1.
May 25: Kallithea 2 OFI 0; Ionikos 3 Panahaiki 0; Xanthi 1 Olympiakos 5; AEK 4 Panionios 2; Panathinaikos 3 Akratitos 1; Giannina 3 PAOK 2.

GREECE – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Olympiakos	30	21	7	2	75	21	70
Panathinaikos	30	22	4	4	50	19	70
AEK	30	21	5	4	74	29	68
PAOK	30	16	5	9	59	38	53
Panionios	30	15	8	7	35	25	53
Aris	30	15	6	9	37	34	51
Iraklis	30	15	4	11	44	37	49
OFI	30	12	8	10	39	34	44
Xanthi	30	8	11	11	31	33	35
Aigaleo	30	7	10	13	28	44	31
Proodeftiki	30	7	9	14	25	38	30
Akratitos	30	7	5	18	33	62	26
Kallithea	30	6	8	16	29	46	26
Ionikos	30	5	9	16	22	42	24
Panahaiki	30	1	6	23	11	71	9
Giannina*	30	6	7	17	25	44	-65

**90pts deducted (3pts for every game played) for non-payment of players*

GREEK CUP – Final

May 17 - Toumba stadium, Salonika
PAOK 1 (Georgiadis 24)
Aris 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 20,000

HOLLAND

Friday, April 25

RKC 3 (Nikiforov 4, Putter 89, Hoogendorp 90)
Willem II 1 (Sektioui 72) Att: 7,500

Saturday, April 26

De Graafschap 1 (Bakens 25)
PSV 6 (Kezman 6, 15, 84, Rommedahl 18, Robben 59, Leandro 90) Att: 12,000

Heerenveen 2 (Jensen 15, Selakovic 90)
Vitesse 2 (Peeters 30, Amoah 41) Att: 14,400

Twente 1 (Polak 27)
Excelsior 0 Att: 13,000

Sunday, April 27

AZ 1 (Buskermolen 85)
Ajax 3 (Van der Vaart 21, Litmanen 48, Van der Meyde 64) Att: 7,753

Feyenoord 1 (Paauwe 90)
RBC 0 Att: 43,000

Groningen 0
NAC 0 Att: 11,473

NEC 1 (Hesp pen 33)
Utrecht 2 (Tanghe 19, 78) Att: 11,500

Friday, May 2

Excelsior 3 (Boutahar 45, Pinas 47, Holman 59)
De Graafschap 4 (Bakens 8, Schulp 16, Hertog 21, Smit 90) Att: 3,468

Saturday, May 3

Ajax 6 (Sneijder 17, Van der Vaart 19, 45, 82, Pasanen 53, Trabelsi 76)
RKC 1 (Janssen 89) Att: 49,670

PSV 2 (Bruggink 69, 80)
AZ 2 (De Cler 25, El-Khattabi 44) Att: 33,500

Vitesse 3 (Amoah 18, 56, Peeters 69)
NAC 1 (Engelaar 47) Att: 22,500

Willem II 1 (Sektioui 65)
Heerenveen 5 (De Jong 12, 17, Selakovic 31, 62, Nurmela 54) Att: 13,300

Zwolle 3 (R Roelofsen 10, Promes 15, Karlsen 90)
Roda JC 1 (Vicelich 75) Att: 6,500

Sunday, May 4

Groningen 0
NEC 0 Att: 11,000

RBC 1 (De Graaf 70)
Twente 0 Att: 5,000

Utrecht 1 (Gluscevic 12)
Feyenoord 2 (Van Persie 3, Buffel 71) Att: 18,925

Tuesday, May 6

NAC 2 (Slot 2, 78)
Zwolle 0 Att: 10,992

Friday, May 9

Heerenveen 2 (Sibon 45, De Jong pen 90)
Groningen 1 (Salmon 72) Att: 14,400

Roda JC 1 (Sergio 12)
RBC 0 Att: 12,000

Saturday, May 10

AZ 3 (De Cler pen 63, El-Khattabi 78, Nelisse 89)
Willem II 2 (Sektioui 17, Van Nieuwstadt 75) Att: 7,326

NAC 2 (Engelaar 31, Bobson 67)
Utrecht 0 Att: 12,950

PSV 7 (Van Bommel 32, 45, 47, 90, Kezman 45, 70, Robben 85)
Excelsior 0 Att: 34,200

Twente 0
Zwolle 0 Att: 13,300

Sunday, May 11

De Graafschap 0
Vitesse 1 (Amoah 39) Att: 11,000

Feyenoord 2 (Kalou 39, Van Hooijdonk 77)
RKC 1 (Van Diemen 6) Att: 43,500

NEC 1 (Hersi 11)
Ajax 2 (Litmanen 65, Maxwell 79) Att: 12,000

Tuesday, May 13

Roda JC 5 (Sergio 30, 59, Cristiano 70, 87, Anastasiou 85)
Groningen 1 (Ikedia 62) Att: 12,400

Friday, May 16

Utrecht 4 (Gluscevic 2, 41, Kuijt pen 8, Chaiat 81)
Roda JC 4 (Cristiano 19, Anastasiou 59, 85, Zwaanswijk og 63) Att: 15,500

Saturday, May 17

RBC 0
NEC 2 (Zonneveld 45, Wielaert 67) Att: 5,000

Vitesse 0
Twente 1 (Houwing 80) Att: 23,600

Willem II 2 (Sektioui 63, Quinn 89)
Excelsior 1 (Boutahar 43) Att: 13,000

Zwolle 0
Heerenveen 1 (Selakovic 36) Att: 6,600

Sunday, May 18

Ajax 7 (Van der Vaart 16, 45, Sneijder 62, Galasek pen 67, Pienaar 72, Maxwell 76, Boukhari 89)
De Graafschap 1 (Van de Haar 3) Att: 49,300

Feyenoord 3 (Van Hooijdonk pen 34, 45, pen 66)
PSV 1 (Kezman 53) Att: 45,000

Groningen 1 (Salmon 87)
AZ 0 Att: 11,824

RKC 2 (Hoogendorp pen 73, pen 75)
NAC 3 (Engelaar 49, Boussaboun 60, Diba 86) Att: 7,100

Sunday, May 25

De Graafschap 1 (Zafarin 44)
Groningen 0 Att: 11,000

Excelsior 4 (Boutahar 4, Pinas 38, Olfers 59, El Hamdaoui 86)
Vitesse 4 (Amoah 15, 44, 79, Claessens 73) Att: 3,124

Heerenveen 6 (Nurmela 1, Sibon 8, Denneboom 13, De Jong 25, 49, Jensen 55)
RBC 0 Att: 14,200

NAC 4 (Penders 30, Schreuder 45, Engelaar pen 53, Koning 90)
AZ 0 Att: 14,268

NEC 0
Zwolle 0 Att: 12,000

PSV 2 (Bruggink 3, Kezman pen 30)
Utrecht 0 Att: 34,000

Roda JC 1 (Cornelisse og 21)
RKC 0 Att: 17,400

Twente 1 (John 90)
Ajax 2 (Chivu pen 64, Van der Vaart 82) Att: 13,400

Willem II 1 (Quinn 7)
Feyenoord 1 (Kalou 74) Att: 14,600

Thursday, May 29

Ajax 3 (Sikora 45, 86, Chivu 63)
Heerenveen 0 Att: 50,272

AZ 4 (El-Khattabi 20, 38, Swerts og 58, Nelisse 87)
Excelsior 1 (Nygaard 60) Att: 7,144

Feyenoord 3 (Kalou 26, Filipovic og 38, Buffel 75)
Roda JC 1 (Cristiano 50) Att: 43,500

Groningen 0
PSV 0 Att: 12,500

RBC 1 (Sillah 83)
NAC 2 (Slot 10, Bobson 47) Att: 5,000

RKC 0
NEC 1 (Simr 90) Att: 7,500

Utrecht 3 (Kuijt 57, 82, Chaiat 77)
Twente 2 (Cziommer 27, 68) Att: 16,200

Vitesse 2 (Jaliens og 61, Amoah 90)
Willem II 0 Att: 22,500

Zwolle 2 (R Roelofsen 4, Bosschaart 22)
De Graafschap 1 (Van de Haar 90) Att: 6,700

HOLLAND – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
PSV	34	26	6	2	87	20	84
Ajax	34	26	5	3	96	32	83
Feyenoord	34	25	5	4	89	39	80
NAC	34	13	13	8	42	31	52
NEC	34	14	9	11	41	40	51
Roda JC	34	14	8	12	58	53	50
Heerenveen	34	13	8	13	61	55	47
Utrecht	34	12	11	11	49	49	47
RKC	34	14	4	16	44	51	46
AZ	34	12	8	14	50	69	44
Willem II	34	11	9	14	48	51	42
Twente	34	10	11	13	36	45	41
RBC	34	10	6	18	33	54	36
Vitesse	34	8	9	17	37	51	33
Groningen	34	7	11	16	28	44	32
Zwolle	34	8	8	18	30	62	32
Excelsior	34	5	8	21	38	72	23
De Graafschap	34	6	5	23	35	84	23

TOP GOALSCORERS
35 Mateja Kezman (PSV)
28 Pierre Van Hooijdonk (Feyenoord)
20 Dirk Kuijt (Utrecht)
18 Thomas Buffel (Feyenoord)
18 Rafael Van der Vaart (Ajax)
16 Rick Hoogendorp (RKC)

HUNGARY

Championship play-offs

Apr 23: Gyor 2 MTK 3; Ferencvaros 2 Ujpest 1; Debrecen 1 Siofok 1.
Apr 26: Siofok 4 MTK 2; Ujpest 0 Debrecen 3; Ferencvaros 1 Gyor 0.
May 3: Debrecen 1 Ferencvaros 1; Gyor 1 Siofok 1.
May 4: MTK 1 Ujpest 2.
May 10: Gyor 0 Debrecen 0; MTK 0 Ferencvaros 0; Siofok 2 Ujpest 3.
May 14: Ferencvaros 0 Siofok 2; Debrecen 1 MTK 2; Ujpest 3 Gyor 1.
May 17: Siofok 3 Debrecen 5; Ujpest 0 Ferencvaros 0; MTK 3 Gyor 1.
May 24: Gyor 0 Ferencvaros 2; Debrecen 2 Ujpest 0; MTK 3 Siofok 1.

HUNGARY – CHAMP'SHIP PLAY-OFFS

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ferencvaros	31	19	6	6	50	24	63
MTK	31	19	6	6	58	34	63
Debrecen	31	13	13	5	57	38	52
Ujpest	31	15	7	9	54	40	52
Siofok	31	11	11	9	44	43	44
Gyor	31	9	9	13	40	48	36

Teams carried forward all points and goals from regular season

HUNGARIAN CUP – Final

May 6 - Ferenc Puskas stadium, Budapest
Ferencvaros 2 (Tokoli 68, 78)
Debrecen 1 (Szucs og 43)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Megyebiro

ITALY

Saturday, April 26

Atalanta 2 (Doni 75, pen 90)
Torino 2 (Donati 22, 89) Att: 15,471

Roma 2 (Cassano 60, Tommasi 76)
Milan 1 (Tomasson 81) Att: 60,000

Sunday, April 27

Bologna 1 (Signori 1)
Chievo 1 (Della Morte 90) Att: 17,500

Como 0
Modena 0 Att: 8,000

Empoli 1 (Di Natale pen 86)
Udinese 1 (Pinzi 53) Att: 9,000

Inter 1 (Crespo 43)
Lazio 1 (Inzaghi 77) Att: 58,430

Juventus 2 (Del Piero 8, 86)
Brescia 1 (Appiah 83) Att: 45,000

Piacenza 5 (Di Francesco 6, Campagnaro 36, 63, Hubner 40, Ferrarese 80)
Perugia 1 (Ze Maria 48) Att: 11,500

Reggina 0
Parma 0 Att: 12,500

Saturday, May 3

Atalanta 1 (Gautieri 71)
Inter 1 (Martins 13) Att: 24,000

Chievo 3 (Di Franceschi 65, 69, Bjelanovic 80)
Piacenza 1 (Di Francesco 49) Att: 11,418

Lazio 0
Juventus 0 Att: 60,146

Milan 2 (Inzaghi pen 11, Nesta 60)
Como 0 Att: 55,000

Modena 1 (Colucci 39)
Empoli 1 (Di Natale 57) Att: 14,000

Parma 1 (Mutu 65)
Bologna 2 (Paramatti 60, Locatelli 67) Att: 16,000

Perugia 0
Brescia 0 Att: 6,000

Reggina 2 (Bonazzoli 16, Nakamura 90)
Roma 3 (Tommasi 61, Emerson 63, Vargas og 68) Att: 24,006

Torino 0
Udinese 1 (Iaquinta 81) Att: 11,821

Saturday, May 10

Bologna 0
Lazio 2 (Inzaghi pen 45, Favalli 59) Att: 21,069

Brescia 1 (Appiah 84)
Milan 0 Att: 19,155

Como 2 (Amoruso 52, Caccia 82)
Chievo 4 (Franceschini 11, 41, Luciano 21, Bjelanovic 48) Att: 5,218

Empoli 0
Atalanta 0 Att: 10,043

Inter 1 (Kallon 37)
Parma 1 (Mutu 65) Att: 56,404

Juventus 2 (Trezeguet pen 25, Di Vaio 46)
Perugia 2 (Miccoli 36, Grosso 90) Att: 51,299

Piacenza 2 (Hubner 72, 75)
Reggina 2 (Di Michele 68, Mozart 77) Att: 7,301

Roma 3 (Cassano 31, 61, De Rossi 54)
Torino 1 (Frezza 77) Att: 53,716

Udinese 2 (Pizarro pen 43, Muzzi 62)
Modena 1 (Kamara 40) Att: 14,912

Saturday, May 17

Atalanta 2 (Doni pen 63, 81)
Como 1 (Caccia 17) Att: 14,014

Chievo 0
Roma 0 Att: 14,869

Lazio 3 (Mihajlovic pen 39, Cesar 45, Claudio Lopez 81)
Brescia 1 (Baggio 20) Att: 68,095

Milan 3 (Pirlo pen 23, Seedorf 51, Inzaghi 66)
Bologna 1 (Meghni 68) Att: 57,766

Modena 0
Inter 2 (Pavan og 28, Kallon 36) Att: 14,124

Parma 3 (Gilardino 67, Adriano 70, Mutu 89)
Piacenza 2 (Maresca 33, Hubner 40) Att: 25,811

Perugia 0
Udinese 2 (Jankulovski 75, Jorgensen 87) Att: 11,891

Reggina 2 (Di Michele 17, Bonazzoli 51)
Juventus 1 (Zalayeta 23) Att: 24,182

Torino 1 (Donati 85)
Empoli 1 (Di Natale 67) Att: 12,440

Saturday, May 24

Bologna 0
Reggina 2 (Bonazzoli 13, Di Michele 68) Att: 24,565

Brescia 2 (Filippini 69, Baggio 86)
Modena 2 (Colucci 4, Vignaroli 20) Att: 15,277

Como 1 (Benin 83)
Torino 0 Att: 6,664

Empoli 0
Parma 2 (Mutu 16, Filippini 86) Att: 5,847

Inter 2 (Crespo 10, 56)
Perugia 2 (Obodo 46, Di Loreto 89) Att: 54,825

Juventus 4 (Zalayeta 16, 57, Trezeguet 70, Zenoni 86)
Chievo 3 (Bierhoff 62, 75, 79) Att: 39,415

Piacenza 4 (Hubner 6, 82, Maresca pen 17, Marchionni 31)
Milan 2 (Brocchi pen 30, 90) Att: 7,386

Roma 1 (De Rossi 30)
Atalanta 2 (Doni 27, Gautieri 55) Att: 52,547

Udinese 2 (Pizarro 67, Jankulovski pen 83)
Lazio 1 (Claudio Lopez pen 86) Att: 14,972

ITALY – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Juventus	34	21	9	4	64	29	72
Inter	34	19	8	7	64	38	65
Milan	34	18	7	9	55	30	61
Lazio	34	15	15	4	57	32	60
Parma	34	15	11	8	55	36	56
Udinese	34	16	8	10	38	35	56
Chievo	34	16	7	11	51	39	55
Roma	34	13	10	11	55	46	49
Brescia	34	9	15	10	36	38	42
Perugia	34	10	12	12	40	48	42
Bologna	34	10	11	13	39	47	41
Modena	34	9	11	14	30	48	38
Empoli	34	9	11	14	36	46	38
Atalanta	34	8	14	12	35	47	38
Reggina	34	10	8	16	38	53	38
Piacenza	34	8	6	20	44	62	30
Como	34	4	12	18	29	57	24
Torino	34	4	9	21	23	58	21

TOP GOALSCORERS
24 Christian Vieri (Inter)
18 Adrian Mutu (Parma)
17 Filippo Inzaghi (Milan)
16 Alessandro Del Piero (Juventus)
15 Adriano (Parma)
15 Claudio Lopez (Lazio)

ITALIAN CUP – Final

1st leg - May 20 - Olympic stadium, Rome
Roma 1 (Totti 28)
Milan 4 (Serginho pen 62, 73, Ambrosini 70, Shevchenko 89)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 60,647. **Ref:** Paparesta

LITHUANIA

LITHUANIAN CUP – Final

May 17 - Telsiai
Atlantas 1 (Kauspadas 27)
Vetra 1 (Kontautas 45)
Aet. **HT:** 1-1. **90mins:** 1-1. **Att:** 3,200.
Ref: Kazlauskas
Atlantas 3-1 on pens

LUXEMBOURG

Championship pool

LUXEMBOURG: CHMP'SHIP POOL – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Grevenmacher	28	18	5	5	68	28	59
F91 Dudelange	28	16	4	8	66	34	52
Jeunesse d'Esch	28	13	9	6	54	30	48
Union L'bourg	28	12	6	10	43	40	42

MALTA

Championship pool

MALTA: CHAMPIONSHIP POOL – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sliema	28	20	4	4	70	28	42 [22]
Birkirkara	28	18	3	7	64	34	37 [20]
Valletta	28	16	5	7	57	31	35 [19]
Hibernians	28	14	5	9	53	36	32 [15]
Pieta	28	7	9	12	27	43	19 [12]
Marsaxlokk	28	8	2	18	34	57	16 [11]

Teams carried forward half their points (figure in brackets) from regular season. All other statistics carried forward in full

MALTESE CUP – Final

May 22 - National stadium, Ta'qali
Birkirkara 1 (Galea 90)
Sliema 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 5,400. **Ref:** Agius

ESM EUROPEAN SPORTS MAGAZINES
GOLDEN SHOE

ESM GOLDEN SHOE STANDINGS AT 25.05.03

pos	name	team	goals	factor	pts
1	Roy Makaay	Dep La Coruna (Spa)	27	2	54
2	Mateja Kezman	PSV Eindhoven (Hol)	35	1.5	52.5
3	Shabani Nonda	Monaco (Fra)	26	2	52
4	Ruud Van Nistelrooy	Manchester Utd (Eng)	25	2	50
5	Thierry Henry	Arsenal (Eng)	24	2	48
	Christian Vieri	Internazionale (Ita)	24	2	48
7	James Beattie	Southampton (Eng)	23	2	46
	Pauleta	Bordeaux (Fra)	23	2	46
9	Thomas Christiansen	Bochum (Ger)	21	2	42
	Giovane Elber	Bayern Munich (Ger)	21	2	42
	Henrik Larsson	Celtic (Sco)	28	1.5	42
	Pierre Van Hooijdonk	Feyenoord (Hol)	28	1.5	42
13	Nihat Kahveci	Real Sociedad (Spa)	20	2	40
	Mark Viduka	Leeds (Eng)	20	2	40
15	Darko Kovacevic	Real Sociedad (Spa)	19	2	38
	Michael Owen	Liverpool (Eng)	19	2	38
	Ronaldo	Real Madrid (Spa)	19	2	38
18	Andrei Krolov	Tallinna VMK (Est)	37	1	37
19	Arman Karamian	Pyunik (Arm)	36	1	36
	Adrian Mutu	Parma (Ita)	18	2	36
	Ricardo Nunez	Grasshopper (Swi)	24	1.5	36

For the latest standings, updated weekly, visit www.worldsoccer.com

MOLDOVA

MOLDOVAN CUP – Final

May 21 - Republican stadium, Chisinau
Zimbru 0
Nistru 0
Aet. **Ref:** Onica
Nistru 4-2 on pens

NORTHERN IRELAND

Championship pool

N IRELAND: CHAMP'SHIP POOL – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Glentoran	38	28	6	4	78	22	90
Portadown	38	24	8	6	89	36	80
Coleraine	38	21	10	7	66	38	73
Linfield	38	17	12	9	70	41	63
Omagh	38	15	6	17	47	57	51
Institute	38	12	6	20	44	75	42

IRISH CUP – Final

May 3 - Windsor Park, Belfast
Coleraine 1 (Tolan 11)
Glentoran 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 10,000. **Ref:** Irvine

NORWAY

Apr 26: Lillestrom 0 Stabaek 2; Bodo/Glimt 2 Molde 0; Aalesund 3 Brann 3; Viking 2 Valerenga 0; Sogndal 3 Tromso 1; Odd Grenland 3 Bryne 2.
Apr 27: Lyn 0 Rosenborg 3.
May 4: Stabaek 0 Bodo/Glimt 0; Bryne 3 Lillestrom 1; Tromso 0 Odd Grenland 2; Valerenga 3 Sogndal 3; Rosenborg 1 Aalesund 0; Molde 2 Lyn 2.
May 5: Brann 0 Viking 3.
May 10: Viking 0 Rosenborg 2.
May 11: Bodo/Glimt 3 Bryne 1; Sogndal 2 Brann 0; Odd Grenland 3 Valerenga 1; Lyn 2 Aalesund 1; Molde 0 Stabaek 0.
May 12: Lillestrom 3 Tromso 2.
May 16: Bryne 3 Molde 0; Tromso 3 Bodo/Glimt 3; Valerenga 1 Lillestrom 1; Brann 3 Odd Grenland 0; Rosenborg 3 Sogndal 1; Aalesund 1 Viking 1; Stabaek 1 Lyn 3.
May 25: Lillestrom 0 Brann 0; Bodo/Glimt 0 Valerenga 0; Molde 2 Tromso 1; Sogndal 1 Aalesund 1; Odd Grenland 2 Rosenborg 3; Lyn 3 Viking 3.
May 26: Stabaek 2 Bryne 1.
May 28: Rosenborg 1 Lillestrom 1; Viking 2 Sogndal 1.
May 29: Tromso 1 Stabaek 3; Valerenga 2 Molde 0; Brann 0 Bodo/Glimt 2; Aalesund 2 Odd Grenland 2; Bryne 4 Lyn 0.

NORWAY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rosenborg	8	7	1	0	20	5	22
Viking	8	4	3	1	16	9	15
Bodo/Glimt	8	4	3	1	13	7	15
Stabaek	8	4	2	2	13	8	14
Sogndal	8	4	2	2	14	11	14
Odd Grenland	8	4	1	3	14	15	13
Bryne	8	3	0	5	14	13	9
Valerenga	8	2	3	3	10	11	9
Lyn	8	2	3	3	12	17	9
Lillestrom	8	2	3	3	7	13	9
Molde	8	2	2	4	8	11	8
Brann	8	1	3	4	7	16	6
Tromso	8	1	2	5	13	20	5
Aalesund	8	0	4	4	11	16	4

POLAND

Apr 25: Legia 3 Katowice 0.
Apr 26: Wisla K 1 Amica 1; Gornik 2 KSZO 0; Pogon 1 Odra 7; Zaglebie 1 Wisla P 1; Ruch C 1 Widzew 2.
Apr 27: Groclin 2 Polonia 0; Garbarnia 1 Lech 2.
May 3: Amica 1 Garbarnia 2; Lech 0 Ruch C 0; Widzew 2 Zaglebie 0; Wisla P 1 Groclin 0; Katowice 2 Pogon 0; Odra 1 Gornik 3; KSZO 0 Wisla K 1.
May 4: Polonia 0 Legia 1.
May 9: Groclin 1 Widzew 1.
May 10: KSZO 0 Amica 2; Wisla K 4 Odra 0; Pogon 0 Polonia 2; Zaglebie 1 Lech 1; Ruch C 1 Garbarnia 1.
May 11: Gornik 1 Katowice 3; Legia 1 Wisla P 0.
May 16: Lech 2 Groclin 3.
May 17: Garbarnia 1 Zaglebie 2; Polonia 1 Gornik 1; Odra 2 KSZO 1; Amica 2 Ruch C 1; Wisla P 2 Pogon 1; Widzew 1 Legia 3.
May 18: Katowice 1 Wisla K 0.
May 20: Odra 0 Amica 3.
May 21: KSZO 0 Katowice 3; Wisla K 3 Polonia 0; Gornik 1 Wisla P 2; Pogon 0 Widzew 1; Legia 2 Lech P 0; Groclin 5 Garbarnia 0; Zaglebie 2 Ruch C 1.
May 24: Amica 2 Zaglebie 2; Ruch C 1 Groclin 1; Lech 6 Pogon 0; Widzew 1 Gornik 0; Polonia 2 KSZO 1; Katowice 2 Odra 1.
May 25: Garbarnia 1 Legia 1; Wisla P 0 Wisla K 3.

POLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Wisla K	28	19	5	4	70	26	62
Katowice	28	19	2	7	37	19	59
Legia	28	16	8	4	55	25	56
Groclin	28	16	8	4	51	26	56
Odra	28	16	4	8	52	40	52
Amica	28	11	9	8	42	32	42
Gornik	28	10	9	9	45	31	39
Polonia	28	11	6	11	34	42	39
Lech	28	8	10	10	39	34	34
Wisla P	28	9	7	12	27	37	34
Widzew	28	9	7	12	27	37	34
Zaglebie	28	8	8	12	33	37	32
Ruch C	28	6	10	12	23	36	28
Garbarnia	28	7	7	14	38	53	28
KSZO	28	4	3	21	20	59	15
Pogon	28	2	3	23	14	73	9

POLISH CUP – Final

1st leg - May 7 - Wisla stadium, Krakow
Wisla Krakow 0
Wisla Plock 1 (Jelen 20)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 4,000. **Ref:** Malek

2nd leg - May 14 - Orlen stadium, Plock
Wisla Plock 0
Wisla Krakow 3 (Zurawski 27, Kuzba 59, 60)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 10,000. **Ref:** Ryszka
Wisla Krakow 3-1 on agg

PORTUGAL

Friday, April 25

Sporting Lisbon 1 (Jardel pen 62)
Beira Mar 1 (Fary 47)

Saturday, April 26

Belenenses 3 (Verona 15, Mauro 72, 80)
Maritimo 1 (Van der Gaag 88)

Sporting Braga 1 (Barroso pen 10)
Benfica 3 (Geovanni 6, Zahovic 23, Nuno Gomes 63)

Sunday, April 27

Moreirense 2 (Flavio Meireles 27, Vicente 76)
Gil Vicente 1 (Manoel 10)

Pacos Ferreira 3 (Serginho 67, Renato 75, Leonardo 89)
Nacional 3 (Rossato pen 3, Alvarez 25, Paulo Assuncao 72)

Santa Clara 1 (Tucho 72)
Setubal 0

Varzim 0
Uniao Leiria 2 (Maciel 44, 47)

Monday, April 28

Academica 1 (Raul Oliveira 35)
FC Porto 1 (Derlei 72)

Boavista 3 (Yuri 29, 39, Silva 52)
Guimaraes 1 (Pedro Mendes 57)

Friday, May 2

Beira Mar 2 (Levato 24, 37)
Belenenses 1 (Verona 59)

Saturday, May 3

Benfica 1 (Sokota 73)
Sporting Lisbon 2 (Ricardo Quaresma 10, Joao Pinto 33)

Sunday, May 4

Academica 1 (Marinescu 51)
Moreirense 1 (Vitor Pereira 21)

Maritimo 0
Boavista 0

Nacional 2 (Gouveia 32, Adriano 45)
Varzim 0

FC Porto 5 (Maniche 6, Derlei 10, 47, Deco 77, Helder Postiga 88)
Santa Clara 0

Setubal 0
Pacos Ferreira 2 (Renato 47, Ze Manuel 70)

Uniao Leiria 1 (Gabriel 30)
Sporting Braga 1 (Castanheira 54)

Monday, May 5

Guimaraes 1 (Cleber 52)
Gil Vicente 1 (Duah 80)

Friday, May 9

Boavista 1 (Ricardo pen 63)
Beira Mar 0

Saturday, May 10

Belenenses 2 (Verona 43, Antchouet 77)
Benfica 4 (Helder 15, Geovanni 19, Sokota 55, Tiago 65)

Moreirense 1 (Armando 58)
Guimaraes 2 (Romeu 28, Rubens Junior 75)

Sunday, May 11

Gil Vicente 0
Maritimo 1 (Eric Gaucho 3)

Pacos Ferreira 1 (Cadu 90)
FC Porto 0

Santa Clara 0
Academica 0

Sporting Braga 4 (Nuno Rocha pen 11, 15, Arrieta 26, Lima 57)
Nacional 1 (Tonanha 62)

Varzim 3 (Paulo Vida 12, pen 58, Pepa 78)
Setubal 2 (Hugo Costa 63, Pascal 88)

Monday, May 12

Sporting Lisbon 1 (Tonito 67)
Uniao Leiria 1 (Maciel 22)

Friday, May 16

Maritimo 1 (Alain 90)
Guimaraes 0

Saturday, May 17

Nacional 1 (Adriano 85)
Sporting Lisbon 1 (Ricardo Quaresma 60)

FC Porto 3 (Jankauskas 12, Capucho 16, Paulinho Santos 41)
Varzim 2 (Jose Antonio 64, 73)

Uniao Leiria 1 (Maciel 70)
Belenenses 4 (Verona 1, Mauro 31, Gerson 63, Antchouet 71)

Sunday, May 18

Academica 2 (Andre 24, Manuel Jose 45)
Pacos Ferreira 2 (Serginho 37, Leonardo 39)

Beira Mar 5 (Ricardo Sousa pen 6, 27, Ivo og 41, Fary 49, Carlinhos 68)
Gil Vicente 0

Benfica 1 (Sokota 38)
Boavista 1 (Pedrosa 33)

Santa Clara 2 (Pedro Henriques 45, Ceara 74)
Moreirense 0

Monday, May 19

Setubal 2 (Jorginho 4, Meyong 18)
Sporting Braga 2 (Barroso pen 82, 87)

Friday, May 23

Guimaraes 0
Beira Mar 2 (Areias 6, Fary 28)

Saturday, May 24

Sporting Lisbon 3 (Paulo Bento 16, Joao Pinto 27, Ricardo Quaresma 68)
Setubal 4 (Meyong 14, 89, Beto og 22, Jorginho 25)

Sunday, May 25

Belenenses 0
Nacional 0

Gil Vicente 0
Benfica 2 (Simao 40, Roger 57)

Maritimo 3 (Ronaldo 53, Van der Gaag 81, Rincon 90)
Moreirense 1 (Afonso Martins 2)

Pacos Ferreira 3 (Paulo Sousa 56, Jurandir 69, 70)
Santa Clara 1 (Tucho 89)

Sporting Braga 1 (Barroso 38)
FC Porto 1 (Helder Postiga 48)

Varzim 0
Academica 3 (Marinescu 5, Andre 36, Paulo Adriano 74)

Monday, May 26

Boavista 0
Uniao Leiria 1 (Maciel 73)

PORTUGAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
FC Porto	33	26	5	2	71	26	83
Benfica	33	22	6	5	70	27	72
Sporting Lisbon	33	17	8	8	52	36	59
Guimaraes	33	14	8	11	47	42	50
Uniao Leiria	33	12	10	11	45	45	46
Pacos Ferreira	33	12	9	12	40	45	45
Gil Vicente	33	13	5	15	40	49	44
Maritimo	33	13	5	15	36	47	44
Belenenses	33	11	9	13	46	47	42
Boavista	33	9	13	11	31	31	40
Nacional	33	9	13	11	40	45	40
Sporting Braga	33	8	14	11	34	46	38
Moreirense	33	8	12	13	40	46	36
Beira Mar	33	9	9	15	42	50	36
Varzim	33	10	5	18	36	49	35
Academica	33	7	13	13	37	48	34
Santa Clara	33	8	10	15	37	52	34
Setubal	33	6	12	15	39	52	30

LEADING GOALSCORERS
18 Simao Sabrosa (Benfica)
17 Fary Faye (Beira Mar)
16 Adriano (Nacional)
15 Eric Gaucho (Maritimo)

ROMANIA

Apr 25: Gloria 0 Bacau 0; Farul 2 U Craiova 2; Otelul 0 Brasov 2.
Apr 26: Arges 2 Ceahlaul 1; Rapid 1 Steaua 2; National 1 Astra 0; UTA 0 Dinamo 0; Sportul 3 Poli AEK 1.
May 3: Bacau 2 National 2; Astra 1 UTA 1; Dinamo 2 Farul 0; U Craiova 2 Sportul 0; Poli AEK 0 Otelul 0; Ceahlaul 2 Brasov 1.
May 4: Arges 0 Rapid 2; Steaua 3 Gloria 0.
May 7: Rapid 1 Ceahlaul 0; Gloria 1 Arges 0; National 0 Steaua 0; UTA 3 Bacau 1; Farul 1 Astra 4; Sportul 5 Dinamo 6; Otelul 0 U Craiova 1; Brasov 2 Poli AEK 0.
May 10: Arges 2 National 0; Bacau 1 Farul 2; Astra 3 Sportul 2; Dinamo 1 Otelul 0; U Craiova 2 Brasov 0; Ceahlaul 3 Poli AEK 2.
May 11: Steaua 5 UTA 2; Rapid 3 Gloria 1.
May 17: Brasov 2 Dinamo 2; Gloria 1 Ceahlaul 0; UTA 2 Arges 2; Sportul 0 Bacau 3; Otelul 2 Astra 1; Poli AEK 2 U Craiova 1.
May 18: Farul 2 Steaua 1; National 1 Rapid 1.
May 24: Gloria 3 National 0; Rapid 3 UTA 0; Arges 2 Farul 1; Steaua 4 Sportul 3; Bacau 0 Otelul 1; Astra 1 Brasov 0; Dinamo 2 Poli AEK 1; Ceahlaul 3 U Craiova 0.
May 28: National 1 Ceahlaul 2; UTA 6 Gloria 0; Farul 2 Rapid 1; Sportul 4 Arges 2; Otelul 1 Steaua 1; Brasov 0 Bacau 1; Poli AEK 2 Astra 1; U Craiova 3 Dinamo 1.

ROMANIA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rapid	30	20	3	7	58	25	63
Steaua	30	16	8	6	42	27	56
Gloria	30	13	6	11	32	33	45
Brasov	30	13	6	11	37	33	45
Ceahlaul	30	12	8	10	43	33	44
Dinamo	30	13	5	12	49	46	44
U Craiova	30	12	8	10	36	37	44
National	30	12	7	11	41	36	43
Astra	30	13	3	14	42	41	42
Farul	30	12	4	14	35	47	40
Arges	30	11	5	14	37	41	38
Bacau	30	10	8	12	31	31	38
Otelul	30	9	9	12	25	37	36
Poli AEK	30	11	2	17	37	52	35
Sportul	30	9	4	17	44	55	31
UTA	30	8	6	16	37	52	30

RUSSIA

May 4: Torpedo-Metallurg 0 Chernomorets 0; Spartak-Alaniya 1 Saturn 0; Kryliya Sovetov 3 Rostov 0; Torpedo Moscow 3 Moscow Spartak 0; Uralan 1 Dinamo 5; Zenit 0 Rotor 0; Shinnik 2 Rubin 2.
May 5: CSKA 2 Lokomotiv 0.
May 9: Kryliya Sovetov 3 Lokomotiv 0; Saturn 2 CSKA 2; Rotor 2 Uralan 0.
May 10: Chernomorets 3 Spartak-Alaniya 0; Rostov 1 Torpedo-Metallurg 0; Rubin 3 Torpedo Moscow 1; Dinamo 7 Zenit 1.
May 11: Moscow Spartak 3 Shinnik 1.
May 17: Torpedo-Metallurg 3 Kryliya Sovetov 0; Uralan 0 Shinnik 2; Zenit 1 Torpedo Moscow 0; Rostov 1 Saturn 2; Rotor 1 Moscow Spartak 1.
May 18: Spartak-Alaniya 0 CSKA 1; Chernomorets 2 Lokomotiv 5; Dinamo 0 Rubin 0.
May 24: CSKA 1 Torpedo-Metallurg 0; Torpedo Moscow 3 Uralan 0; Shinnik 3 Zenit 0; Rotor 3 Rubin 1.
May 25: Kryliya Sovetov 3 Spartak-Alaniya 0; Lokomotiv 0 Rostov 0; Saturn 2 Chernomorets 0; Moscow Spartak 2 Dinamo 1.

RUSSIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
CSKA	10	8	1	1	19	8	25
Saturn	10	5	3	2	15	10	18
Dinamo	10	5	2	3	20	10	17
Kryliya Sovetov	10	4	4	2	16	8	16
Rostov	10	4	4	2	9	8	16
Zenit	10	4	3	3	8	14	15
Torpedo Moscow	10	4	2	4	13	13	14
Rotor	10	3	4	3	12	10	13
Rubin	10	3	4	3	11	11	13
Moscow Spartak	10	3	4	3	13	14	13
Shinnik	10	2	6	2	12	10	12
Spartak-Alaniya	10	4	0	6	8	18	12
Chernomorets	10	2	5	3	10	12	11
Lokomotiv	10	3	2	5	13	16	11
Torpedo-Metalurg	10	1	3	6	7	10	6
Uralan	10	0	3	7	4	18	3

SCOTLAND

Saturday, April 26

Aberdeen 1 (Hinds 25)
Livingston 0 Att: 8,912

Dundee Utd 1 (McCracken 32)
Hibernian 2 (McManus pen 58, Murray 90) Att: 6,758

Dunfermline 0
Hearts 1 (Pressley pen 57) Att: 6,968

Partick 3 (Burns 29, Britton 68, 90)
Motherwell 0 Att: 4,870

Sunday, April 27

Dundee 0
Kilmarnock 1 (Innes 76) Att: 5,964

Rangers 1 (De Boer 57)
Celtic 2 (Thompson pen 29, Hartson 43) Att: 49,740

Saturday, May 3

Dunfermline 1 (McNicol 80)
Celtic 4 (Larsson 21, Petrov 29, 32, Thompson pen 59) Att: 8,923

Hibernian 3 (Jack 42, Riordan 61, 72)
Aberdeen 1 (Tiernan 88) Att: 7,904

Kilmarnock 1 (McSwegan 29)
Hearts 0 Att: 9,091

Livingston 3 (Xausa 25, Zarate 44, Camacho 50)
Partick 1 (Lilley 45) Att: 5,349

Motherwell 2 (Pearson 11, Vaughan 85)
Dundee Utd 2 (Miller 49, McIntyre 81) Att: 9,056

Sunday, May 4

Dundee 2 (Caballero 17, 28)
Rangers 2 (Wilkie og 1, Arteta pen 85) Att: 9,195

Wednesday, May 7

Motherwell 0
Celtic 4 (Petrov 36, 56, Lambert 61, 65) Att: 12,037

Saturday, May 10

Aberdeen 2 (Hinds 46, McGuire 60)
Partick 1 (Burns pen 17) Att: 9,960

Celtic 1 (Thompson pen 29)
Hearts 0 Att: 58,175

Dundee 2 (Lovell pen 17, 58)
Dunfermline 2 (Crawford 54, Bullen 90) Att: 5,411

Hibernian 1 (Brebner pen 66)
Motherwell 0 Att: 7,809

Livingston 1 (Bingham 78)
Dundee Utd 2 (McIntyre 2, Miller 90) Att: 6,314

Sunday, May 11

Rangers 4 (Mols 6, 7, Arveladze 59, Caniggia 80)
Kilmarnock 0 Att: 49,036

Wednesday, May 14

Celtic 6 (Larsson 14, Thompson 27, 30, Maloney 52, 63, Mjallby 77)
Dundee 2 (Smith 26, Mair 90) Att: 57,542

Saturday, May 17

Dunfermline 2 (Nicholson 5, Mason 11)
Kilmarnock 2 (McDonald 26, Boyd 90) Att: 6,896

Livingston 1 (Pasquinelli 87)
Hibernian 2 (Brown 38, 69) Att: 5,423

Motherwell 2 (Clarkson 16, McFadden pen 84)
Aberdeen 3 (Hinds 19, Deloumeaux 28, Sheerin 34) Att: 4,731

Partick 0
Dundee Utd 1 (Paterson 59) Att: 6,357

Sunday, May 18

Hearts 0
Rangers 2 (De Boer 65, Lovenkrands 73) Att: 15,632

Saturday, May 24

Dundee Utd 0
Aberdeen 2 (Mackie 51, Tosh 55) Att: 8,516

Hibernian 2 (Jack 8, Brown 34)
Partick 3 (Britton 29, Rowson 52, Burns 86) Att: 9,286

Motherwell 6 (Lasley 30, 90, Craig 57, McFadden 64, pen 74, 75)
Livingston 2 (Makel 16, McMenamin 54) Att: 4,790

Sunday, May 25

Hearts 1 (De Vries 78)
Dundee 0 Att: 12,205

Kilmarnock 0
Celtic 4 (Sutton 16, 45, Thompson pen 54, Petrov 83) Att: 16,722

Rangers 6 (Mols 3, Caniggia 16, Arveladze 30, De Boer 64, Thompson 67, Arteta pen 90)
Dunfermline 1 (Dair 11) Att: 49,731

SCOTLAND: CHAMP'SHIP POOL – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rangers	38	31	4	3	101	28	97
Celtic	38	31	4	3	98	26	97
Hearts	38	18	9	11	57	51	63
Kilmarnock	38	16	9	13	47	56	57
Dunfermline	38	13	7	18	54	71	46
Dundee	38	10	14	14	50	60	44

SCOTLAND: RELEGATION POOL – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Hibernian	38	15	6	17	56	64	51
Aberdeen	38	13	10	15	41	54	49
Livingston	38	9	8	21	48	62	35
Partick	38	8	11	19	37	58	35
Dundee Utd	38	7	11	20	35	68	32
Motherwell	38	7	7	24	45	71	28

TOP GOALSCORERS
28 Henrik Larsson (Celtic)
18 Stevie Crawford (Dunfermline)
18 John Hartson (Celtic)
16 Alex Burns (Partick)
16 Ronald De Boer (Rangers)
16 Barry Ferguson (Rangers)

SERBIA & MONTENEGRO

Apr 26: Rad 1 Partizan 0; Zemun 2 Rudar P 0; Red Star 1 Vojvodina 0; Mogren 0 OFK 3; Sartid 2 Obilic 0; Zeleznik 3 Zeta 1; Cukaricki 1 Javor 0; Sutjeska 3 Hajduk K 1; Radnicki N 0 Radnicki 0 1.
May 3: Radnicki N 1 Rad 1; Radnicki 0 0 Sutjeska 2; Hajduk K 1 Cukaricki 0; Javor 1 Zeleznik 0; Zeta 0 Sartid 1; Obilic 4 Mogren 0; OFK 0 Red Star 2; Vojvodina 1 Zemun 0; Rudar P 2 Partizan 3.
May 7: Cukaricki 1 Radnicki 0 2; Mogren 3 Zeta 6; Partizan 4 Vojvodina 0; Rad 1 Rudar P 0; Red Star 5 Obilic 1; Sartid 0 Javor 0; Sutjeska 2 Radnicki N 1; Zeleznik 3 Hajduk K 2; Zemun 1 OFK 2.
May 10: Sutjeska 2 Rad 1; Radnicki N 1 Cukaricki 2; Radnicki 0 0 Zeleznik 0; Hajduk K 0 Sartid 0; Javor 2 Mogren 1; Zeta 3 Red Star 0; Obilic 1 Zemun 1; OFK 0 Partizan 2; Vojvodina 4 Rudar P 0.
May 17: Rad 2 Vojvodina 0; Rudar P 0 OFK 1; Partizan 1 Obilic 0; Zemun 3 Zeta 1; Red Star 1 Javor 0; Mogren 1 Hajduk K 1; Sartid 3 Radnicki 0 1; Zeleznik 2 Radnicki N 1; Cukaricki 2 Sutjeska 1.
May 21: Cukaricki 0 Rad 1; Sutjeska 1 Zeleznik 0; Radnicki N 3 Sartid 3; Radnicki 0 2 Mogren 0; Hajduk K 3 Red Star 2; Javor 1 Zemun 1; Zeta 1 Partizan 4; Obilic 2 Rudar P 1; OFK 4 Vojvodina 0.
May 23: Partizan 3 Javor 0.
May 24: Rad 2 OFK 2; Vojvodina 0 Obilic 2; Rudar P 1 Zeta 4; Zemun 1 Hajduk K 0; Red Star 1 Radnicki 0 0; Mogren 3 Radnicki N 0; Sartid 1 Sutjeska 1; Zeleznik 5 Cukaricki 2.

SERBIA & MONTENEGRO – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Partizan	34	29	2	3	88	36	89
Red Star	34	21	7	6	68	26	70
OFK	34	19	6	9	57	36	63
Sutjeska	34	19	5	10	43	32	62
Zeleznik	34	18	8	8	56	37	62
Vojvodina	34	17	5	12	48	36	56
Zeta	34	15	6	13	51	43	51
Obilic	34	14	9	11	45	35	51
Hajduk K	34	13	9	12	39	29	48
Zemun	34	13	8	13	42	39	47
Sartid	34	10	15	9	44	44	45
Radnicki O	34	11	11	12	35	41	44
Rad	34	11	10	13	39	43	43
Cukaricki	34	10	7	17	42	56	37
Javor	34	9	7	18	21	44	34
Mogren	34	5	6	23	33	76	21
Rudar P	34	4	6	24	19	62	18
Radnicki N	34	2	5	27	23	78	11

SLOVAKIA

SLOVAKIAN CUP – Final

May 8 - Topolcany
Slovan Bratislava 1 (Hornyak 115)
Matador Puchov 2 (Pernis 111, Breska 116)
Aet. **HT:** 0-0. **90mins:** 0-0. **Att:** 4,356. **Ref:** Gadosi

SLOVENIA

SLOVENIAN CUP – Final

1st leg - May 14 - Centralni stadium, Ljubljana
Olimpija 1 (Puc 89)
Publikum 1 (Kvas pen 40)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 4,800. **Ref:** Ceferin
Sent off: Budicin (Olimpija) 39min

2nd leg - May 21 - Skalna klet stadium, Celje
Publikum 2 (Koren 15, Kvas 72)
Olimpija 2 (Zlogar 59, Prosinecki 65)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 3,000. **Ref:** Krajnc
Agg 3-3. Olimpija on away goals

SPAIN

Saturday, April 26

Athletic Bilbao 3 (Etxeberria 35, Urzaiz 41, Ezquerro 45)
Betis 1 (Fernando 26) Att: 36,000

Atletico Madrid 0
Osasuna 1 (Ivan Rosado 44) Att: 55,000

Sunday, April 27

Barcelona 2 (Saviola 13, Kluivert 24)
Real Sociedad 1 (Nihat 81) Att: 75,000

Celta Vigo 0
Valladolid 0 Att: 18,000

Malaga 2 (Dely Valdes 61, 71)
Racing Santander 2 (Javi Guerrero 58, Regueiro 83) Att: 16,000

Mallorca 3 (Eto'o 4, 66, Riera 13)
Deportivo La Coruna 0 Att: 20,000

Rayo Vallecano 0
Espanyol 3 (Milosevic 37, 47, Roger 56) Att: 14,500

Recreativo 5 (Raul Molina pen 33, Viqueira 51, 73, Pernia 83, Quique Romero 86)
Villarreal 0 Att: 19,000

Sevilla 1 (Gallardo 39)
Real Madrid 3 (Ivan Helguera 24, Zidane 54, Morientes 86) Att: 60,000

Valencia 3 (Reveillere 31, Rufete 57, Aimar 67)
Alaves 0 Att: 42,000

Saturday, May 3

Real Madrid 1 (Ronaldo 10)
Mallorca 5 (Pandiani 48, Riera 52, Eto'o 62, Roberto Carlos og 68, Carlos 90) Att: 70,000

Real Sociedad 1 (Xabi Alonso 30)
Sevilla 0 Att: 25,000

Sunday, May 4

Alaves 0
Celta Vigo 0 Att: 15,000

Barcelona 3 (Luis Enrique 68, Overmars 76, Saviola 89)
Rayo Vallecano 0 Att: 47,200

Betis 1 (Fernando 34)
Espanyol 1 (Domoraud 86) Att: 30,000

Deportivo La Coruna 5 (Valeron 26, Victor 27, Makaay pen 32, 37, 59)
Recreativo 0 Att: 26,000

Osasuna 1 (Rivero 69)
Athletic Bilbao 5 (Ocio 15, Ezquerro 31, Yeste 41, Arriaga 65, Karanka 76) Att: 14,327

Racing Santander 2 (Bodipo 10, 25)
Valencia 1 (Rufete 11) Att: 18,000

Valladolid 3 (Fernando Sales 30, Aganzo 50, 74)
Atletico Madrid 1 (Jose Mari 60) Att: 18,000

Villarreal 0
Malaga 0 Att: 15,000

Saturday, May 10

Athletic Bilbao 0
Valladolid 0 Att: 38,000

Atletico Madrid 0
Alaves 1 (Ilie 55) Att: 25,000

Espanyol 0
Osasuna 0 Att: 18,300

Malaga 0
Deportivo La Coruna 2 (Donato 13, Scaloni 90) Att: 17,000

Recreativo 0
Real Madrid 0 Att: 20,000

Sunday, May 11

Celta Vigo 2 (Juanfran 37, Edu 86)
Racing Santander 2 (Javi Guerrero pen 54, Diego Alonso 90) Att: 18,000

Mallorca 1 (Eto'o 61)
Real Sociedad 3 (De Pedro 9, Karpin 25, Kovacevic 54) Att: 19,000

Rayo Vallecano 1 (Bolo 5)
Betis 1 (Fernando 43) Att: 13,000

Sevilla 0
Barcelona 0 Att: 35,000

Valencia 1 (Juan Sanchez pen 79)
Villarreal 2 (Jorge Lopez 36, Farinos 41) Att: 40,000

Saturday, May 17

Deportivo La Coruna 1 (Donato 49)
Valencia 2 (Fabio Aurelio 14, 63) Att: 34,000

Racing Santander 0
Atletico Madrid 2 (Javi Moreno 63, pen 72) Att: 17,158

Sunday, May 18

Alaves 2 (Magno 27, Astudillo 28)
Athletic Bilbao 4 (Yeste 19, Urzaiz 57, Etxeberria 75, 87) Att: 16,577

Barcelona 1 (Kluivert 72)
Mallorca 2 (Novo 22, Carlos 87) Att: 48,129

Osasuna 2 (Moha 31, Punal pen 40)
Betis 1 (Juanito 27) Att: 16,644

Real Madrid 5 (Morientes 8, 55, Raul 14, 83, Roberto Carlos 18)
Malaga 1 (Manu 63) Att: 67,134

Real Sociedad 1 (Nihat 8)
Recreativo 0 Att: 30,000

Sevilla 3 (Javi Casquero 45, Reyes 49, pen 79)
Rayo Vallecano 3 (Luis Cembranos pen 63, Michel I 85, Peragon 86) Att: 35,000

Valladolid 1 (Fernando Sales 13)
Espanyol 1 (Roger 16) Att: 11,500

Villarreal 5 (Guayre 48, 89, Victor 53, Jorge Lopez 58, Palermo 61)
Celta Vigo 0 Att: 20,000

Saturday, May 24

Athletic Bilbao 2 (Karanka 55, Urzaiz pen 90)
Racing Santander 1 (Munitis 46) Att: 35,000

Atletico Madrid 3 (Arruabarrena og 30, Fernando Torres 69, 73)
Villarreal 2 (Calleja 22, Josico 41) Att: 30,000

Celta Vigo 3 (Jesuli 57, Edu 62, 77)
Deportivo La Coruna 0 Att: 24,000

Rayo Vallecano 0
Osasuna 0 Att: 9,000

Valencia 1 (Fabio Aurelio 32)
Real Madrid 2 (Ronaldo 26, 65) Att: 50,000

Sunday, May 25

Betis 2 (Filipescu 64, Dani 88)
Valladolid 2 (Colsa 46, 78) Att: 30,000

Espanyol 3 (Milosevic 41, pen 46, Maxi Rodriguez 90)
Alaves 1 (Llorens 58) Att: 21,950

Malaga 0
Real Sociedad 2 (Gabilondo 78, Kovacevic 89) Att: 17,000

Mallorca 1 (Eto'o 14)
Sevilla 3 (Antonio 42, 81, Reyes 53) Att: 15,000

Recreativo 1 (Joaozinho 87)
Barcelona 3 (Saviola 43, Kluivert 53, Riquelme 84) Att: 19,500

SPAIN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Real Sociedad	35	21	9	5	65	41	72
Real Madrid	35	20	11	4	78	40	71
Dep La Coruna	35	20	6	9	60	41	66
Celta Vigo	35	16	9	10	41	31	57
Valencia	35	16	8	11	51	31	56
Athletic Bilbao	35	14	9	12	58	55	51
Barcelona	35	12	11	12	56	45	47
Atletico Madrid	35	12	11	12	49	46	47
Sevilla	35	12	11	12	35	33	47
Mallorca	35	13	8	14	46	54	47
Betis	35	11	12	12	47	50	45
Malaga	35	10	13	12	40	44	43
Villarreal	35	11	10	14	40	46	43
Espanyol	35	10	12	13	43	45	42
Valladolid	35	11	9	15	34	37	42
Racing Santander	35	12	5	18	45	55	41
Osasuna	35	9	11	15	31	44	38
Recreativo	35	8	10	17	34	59	34
Alaves	35	8	10	17	35	62	34
Rayo Vallecano	35	7	9	19	30	59	30

LEADING GOALSCORERS
27 Roy Makaay (Deportivo La Coruna)
20 Nihat Kahveci (Real Sociedad)
19 Darko Kovacevic (Real Sociedad)
19 Ronaldo (Real Madrid)
15 Patrick Kluivert (Barcelona)

SWEDEN

Apr 26: Elfsborg 0 Helsingborgs 0; Enkopings 0 Osters 2; Orebro 1 Djurgardens 0.
Apr 27: AIK 3 Orgryte 0; Sundsvall 1 Malmo 1; IFK Gothenburg 0 Halmstads 0; Landskrona 0 Hammarby 1.
May 4: Halmstads 3 Enkopings 2; Orgryte 1 Landskrona 1; Osters 0 AIK 1.
May 5: Hammarby 2 Malmo 1; Helsingborgs 0 Orebro 0; Elfsborg 2 Sundsvall 2.
May 6: Djurgardens 3 IFK Gothenburg 1.
May 11: AIK 4 Halmstads 2; Enkopings 0 Djurgardens 4; Sundsvall 0 Hammarby 0; Landskrona 2 Osters 0.
May 12: IFK Gothenburg 1 Helsingborgs 2; Orebro 2 Elfsborg 1.
May 13: Malmo 1 Orgryte 1.
May 18: Djurgardens 2 Sundsvall 0; Malmo 4 Enkopings 0.
May 19: Hammarby 1 IFK Gothenburg 1; Landskrona 1 AIK 2; Orgryte 2 Orebro 0.
May 20: Helsingborgs 0 Halmstads 1.
May 25: Orebro 5 Osters 1.
May 26: AIK 2 Malmo 0; Helsingborgs 2 Djurgardens 1.
May 27: Enkopings 1 Hammarby 2; Sundsvall 3 Landskrona 1; IFK Gothenburg 5 Orgryte 2.
May 28: Elfsborg 1 Halmstads 1.

SWEDEN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
AIK	8	6	1	1	17	6	19
Djurgardens	8	6	0	2	21	4	18
Hammarby	8	5	3	0	13	6	18
Helsingborgs	8	4	2	2	10	8	14
Orebro	8	4	1	3	13	11	13
Halmstads	8	3	2	3	11	12	11
IFK Gothenburg	8	2	3	3	12	10	9
Malmo	8	2	3	3	11	11	9
Landskrona	8	2	3	3	10	11	9
Sundsvall	8	2	3	3	9	11	9
Orgryte	8	2	2	4	11	17	8
Osters	7	2	1	4	6	12	7
Elfsborg	7	1	3	3	7	14	6
Enkopings	8	0	1	7	4	22	1

SWITZERLAND

Championship pool

Apr 26: Wil 1900 1 Zurich 0.
Apr 27: Young Boys 2 Basle 0; Grasshopper 2 Neuchatel Xamax 2.
Apr 28: Thun 3 Servette 1.
May 3: Servette 0 Grasshoppers 4; Zurich 4 Young Boys 2.
May 4: Wil 1900 4 Basel 5; Thun 2 Neuchatel Xamax 1.
May 8: Basle 3 Zurich 1; Neuchatel Xamax 1 Servette 3; Grasshopper 5 Thun 1; Young Boys 3 Wil 1900 4.
May 16: Grasshopper 2 Basle 2.
May 17: Servette 1 Wil 1900 0.
May 18: Thun 1 Zurich 2; Neuchatel Xamax 2 Young Boys 0.
May 21: Wil 1900 1 Neuchatel Xamax 1; Young Boys 2 Servette 1; Zurich 1 Grasshopper 1; Basle 4 Thun 0.
May 25: Neuchatel Xamax 2 Zurich 0; Servette 0 Basle 4; Grasshopper 4 Wil 1900 2; Thun 4 Young Boys 2.

SWITZERLAND – CHAMPIONSHIP POOL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Grasshopper	13	8	5	0	33	13	54 [25]
Basle	13	9	2	2	35	17	53 [24]
Neuchatel X	13	5	4	4	18	14	35 [16]
Young Boys	13	6	1	6	19	25	34 [15]
Servette	13	4	4	5	14	21	31 [15]
Zurich	13	3	3	7	15	21	28 [16]
Thun	13	3	2	8	16	28	27 [16]
Wil 1900	13	2	3	8	17	28	25 [16]

Teams carried forward half their points (figure in brackets) from regular season

SWISS CUP – Final

May 11 - St Jakob-Park, Basle
Basle 6 (Huggel 13, Gimenez 35, 43, M Yakin 64, Smiljanic 77, Barberis 83)
Neuchatel Xamax 0
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 31,500. **Ref:** Rogalla

TURKEY

Apr 26: Elazigspor 0 Besiktas 1; Ankaragucu 3 Diyarbakirspor 1; Denizlispor 1 Kocaelispor 2; Fenerbahce 1 Samsunspor 1.
Apr 27: Galatasaray 2 Adanaspor 2; Malatyaspor 4 Bursaspor 2; Altay 3 Genclerbirligi 3; Trabzonspor 0 Goztepe 0; Gaziantepspor 4 Istanbulspor 3.
May 3: Genclerbirligi 0 Adanaspor 2; Besiktas 2 Altay 0; Istanbulspor 2 Denizlispor 1; Samsunspor 4 Elazigspor 3; Bursaspor 2 Fenerbahce 1.
May 4: Goztepe 0 Ankaragucu 1; Trabzonspor 1 Galatasaray 2; Diyarbakirspor 0 Gaziantepspor 1; Kocaelispor 2 Malatyaspor 3.
May 9: Fenerbahce 1 Kocaelispor 0.
May 10: Adanaspor 0 Besiktas 1.
May 11: Elazigspor 2 Bursaspor 1; Denizlispor 2 Diyarbakirspor 0; Galatasaray 1 Genclerbirligi 1; Gaziantepspor 3 Goztepe 1; Malatyaspor 1 Istanbulspor 2; Altay 2 Samsunspor 2; Ankaragucu 2 Trabzonspor 0.
May 16: Trabzonspor 2 Gaziantepspor 1.
May 17: Samsunspor 0 Adanaspor 2; Bursaspor 2 Altay 1; Goztepe 2 Denizlispor 3; Kocaelispor 1 Elazigspor 3; Istanbulspor 2 Fenerbahce 0; Diyarbakirspor 1 Malatyaspor 1; Galatasaray 3 Ankaragucu 0; Genclerbirligi 1 Besiktas 2.
May 25: Gaziantepspor 4 Ankaragucu 2; Adanaspor 2 Bursaspor 2; Fenerbahce 0 Diyarbakirspor 0; Besiktas 1 Galatasaray 0; Malatyaspor 4 Goztepe 1; Elazigspor 1 Istanbulspor 0; Altay 5 Kocaelispor 0; Genclerbirligi 1 Samsunspor 1; Denizlispor 1 Trabzonspor 1.

TURKEY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Besiktas	33	25	7	1	59	18	82
Galatasaray	33	23	5	5	59	26	74
Genclerbirligi	33	19	9	5	75	37	66
Gaziantepspor	33	16	9	8	60	39	57
Trabzonspor	33	13	12	8	44	31	51
Fenerbahce	33	13	11	9	54	41	50
Malatyaspor	33	13	10	10	54	45	49
Ankaragucu	33	15	3	15	43	41	48
Istanbulspor	33	12	6	15	42	47	42
Denizlispor	33	10	9	14	36	41	39
Samsunspor	33	10	9	14	39	55	39
Adanaspor	33	9	10	14	42	53	37
Diyarbakirspor	33	9	9	15	33	45	36
Elazigspor	33	9	7	17	38	58	34
Altay	33	9	7	17	48	69	34
Bursaspor	33	8	9	16	39	61	33
Goztepe	33	5	10	18	31	56	25
Kocaelispor	33	6	4	23	31	64	22

TURKISH CUP – Final

Apr 23 - Antalya
Trabzonspor 3 (Mehmet 9, Gokdeniz 32, 67)
Genclerbirligi 1 (Ahmed 45)
HT: 2-1

UKRAINE

Apr 26: Karpaty 1 Dnipro 0; Chornomorets 1 Metalist 0; Illichivets 0 Arsenal 0; Metalurh D 2 Tavriya 0; Olexandria 2 Metalurh Z 1; Obolon 0 Shakhtar 1; Vorskla 1 Dynamo 2; Kryvbas 0 Volyn-1 1.
May 4: Volyn-1 0 Karpaty 1; Dynamo 1 Kryvbas 0; Shakhtar 0 Vorskla 0; Metalurh Z 2 Obolon 0; Tavriya 3 Olexandria 1; Metalist 0 Illichivets 1; Dnipro 0 Chornomorets 0.
May 5: Arsenal 1 Metalurh D 3.
May 8: Kryvbas 0 Shakhtar 1; Volyn-1 1 Dynamo 0.
May 11: Karpaty 2 Chornomorets 1; Illichivets 2 Dnipro 0; Metalurh D 3 Metalist 2; Olexandria 0 Arsenal 0; Obolon 1 Tavriya 1; Vorskla 2 Metalurh Z 0.
May 17: Metalurh Z 2 Kryvbas 1; Metalist 0 Olexandria 1; Tavriya 3 Vorskla 2; Chornomorets 3 Illichivets 2; Dnipro 4 Metalurh D 1; Dynamo 2 Karpaty 0; Shakhtar 1 Volyn-1 3.
May 18: Arsenal 2 Obolon 0.
May 21: Dynamo 2 Shakhtar 1.
May 24: Olexandria 0 Dnipro 1; Karpaty 1 Illichivets 1; Metalurh D 2 Chornomorets 0; Obolon 3 Metalist 1; Vorskla 1 Arsenal 1; Kryvbas 2 Tavriya 1; Volyn-1 0 Metalurh Z 2.
May 28: Tavriya 1 Volyn-1 1; Arsenal 2 Kryvbas 1; Metalist 0 Vorskla 0; Dnipro 4 Obolon 2; Chornomorets 2 Olexandria 1; Illichivets 1 Metalurh D 1.
May 29: Shakhtar 4 Karpaty 0; Metalurh Z 0 Dynamo 3.

UKRAINE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dynamo	27	20	4	3	57	17	64
Shakhtar	27	20	3	4	53	21	63
Arsenal	27	15	8	4	48	20	53
Dnipro	27	16	5	6	40	21	53
Metalurh D	27	16	5	6	40	26	53
Volyn-1	27	12	5	10	32	35	41
Tavriya	27	9	5	13	31	42	32
Karpaty	27	8	7	12	25	34	31
Illichivets	27	7	9	11	31	35	30
Chornomorets	27	9	3	15	24	37	30
Kryvbas	27	7	7	13	22	30	28
Olexandria	27	6	9	12	23	39	27
Vorskla	27	7	6	14	21	38	27
Obolon	27	6	7	14	27	39	25
Metalurh Z	27	6	6	15	20	37	24
Metalist	27	5	5	17	14	37	20

WALES

WALES – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Barry	34	26	5	3	84	26	83
TNS	34	24	8	2	68	21	80
Bangor	34	22	5	7	75	34	71
Aberystwyth	34	17	9	8	54	38	60
Connah's Quay	34	18	5	11	55	46	59
Rhyl	34	17	7	10	52	33	58
Afan Lido	34	14	10	10	44	34	52
Caersws	34	15	6	13	57	52	51
Cwmbran	34	14	8	12	51	40	50
Newtown	34	12	6	16	48	54	42
Port Talbot	34	11	6	17	36	51	39
Flexsys Cefn	34	11	5	18	37	51	38
Haverfordwest	34	10	5	19	40	68	35
Caernarfon	34	8	10	16	43	53	34
Carmarthen	34	9	5	20	33	66	32
Oswestry	34	6	10	18	36	67	28
Welshpool	34	7	7	20	30	62	28
Llanelli	34	4	5	25	42	89	17

WELSH CUP – Final

May 11 - Stebonheath Park, Llanelli
Barry 2 (Ramasut pen 28, Phillips 86)
Cwmbran 2 (Welsh 34, Moore 39)
Aet. **HT:** 1-2. **90mins:** 2-2. **Att:** 852. **Ref:** Bevan
Barry 4-3 on pens

SOUTH AMERICA

LIBERTADORES CUP

2nd rnd, 1st legs

Apr 29 - Cali
America (Col) 1 (Banguero 43)
Racing Club (Arg) 1 (Milito 68)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Chandia (Chl)

May 1 - Buenos Aires
River Plate (Arg) 2 (D'Alessandro 84, Cavenaghi 89)
Corinthians (Bra) 1 (Jorge Wagner 68)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Hidalgo (Per)
Sent off: C Husain (River) 67min; Kleber (Corinthians) 77min

May 6 - Mexico City
Cruz Azul (Mex) 0
Deportivo Cali (Col) 0
Ref: Gonzalez (Par)

2nd rnd, 2nd legs

May 6 - Medellin
Independiente Medellin (Col) 0
Cerro Porteno (Par) 1 (J M Nunez 51)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Rezende (Bra)
Sent off: Baez 69min, Achucarro 75min (both Cerro Porteno); Moreno (Independiente) 75min
Agg 1-1. Independiente 4-2 on pens

May 7 - Santos
Santos (Bra) 2 (Ricardo Oliveira 8, Eguren og 64)
Nacional (Uru) 2 (Eguren 38, O'Neill 41)
HT: 1-2. **Ref:** Baldassi (Arg)
Agg 6-6. Santos 3-1 on pens

May 8 - Calama
Cobreloa (Chl) 0
Pumas UNAM (Mex) 0
Ref: Mendez (Uru)
Cobreloa 1-0 on agg

May 8 - Porto Alegre
Gremio (Bra) 3 (Rodrigo Fabri 16, Christian 21, 49)
Olimpia (Par) 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Elizondo (Arg)
Gremio 6-2 on agg

May 13 - Cali
Deportivo Cali 0
Cruz Azul 0
Ref: Hidalgo (Per)
Agg 0-0. Cruz Azul 3-2 on pens

May 13 - Buenos Aires
Racing Club 0
America 0
Ref: Gonzalez (Par)
Sent off: Ubeda (Racing) 90min; L F Moreno (America) 90min
Agg 1-1. America 6-5 on pens

May 14 - Sao Paulo
Corinthians 1 (Liedson 8)
River Plate 2 (Demichelis 21, Fuertes pen 70)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Ruiz (Col)
Sent off: Roger 44min, Fabinho 89min (both Corinthians)
River Plate 4-2 on agg

May 15 - Belem
Paysandu (Bra) 2 (Lecheva 52, Luis Fernando 86)
Boca Juniors (Arg) 4 (Barros Schelotto 14, pen 67, pen 70, Delgado 57)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Larrionda (Uru)
Sent off: Wellington 69min, Sandro 81min (both Paysandu)
Boca 4-3 on agg

Quarter-finals, 1st legs

May 20 - Buenos Aires
River Plate 2 (D'Alessandro 17, Lequi 90)
America 1 (Vasquez 57)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Oliveira (Bra)

May 21 - Calama
Cobreloa 1 (Fuentes 10)
Boca Juniors 2 (Barros Schelotto 15, 76)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Rezende (Bra)

May 21 - Mexico City
Cruz Azul 2 (Palencia 17, 50)
Santos 2 (Renato 21, Diego 76)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Ruiz (Col)

May 22 - Porto Alegre
Gremio 2 (Gilberto 15, Rodrigo Fabri 34)
Independiente Medellin 2 (Molina 2, Montoya 17)
HT: 2-2. **Ref:** Aquino (Par)

LIBERTADORES CUP

Colombians threaten traditional order

THE traditionalists will be expecting a Santos-Boca Juniors Final, but there is a chance that this year's Libertadores Cup will come to an all-Colombian climax.

After seeing off Racing Club and River Plate, America of Cali will feel capable of completing a hat-trick of wins over Argentinian opposition when they take on Boca Juniors.

Both sides have grown in stature during the competition. America have done well to shrug off two heavy defeats by Santos in the group phase. Their strength is in attack, with Julian Vasquez, Jairo Castillo and David Ferreira forming a dangerous front three, while full-backs Ruben Bustos and Kilian Virviescas advance to good effect

Previously sluggish Boca moved up a gear with the introduction of Carlos Tevez, pushed into the forward line by coach Carlos Bianchi. With his tight dribbling skills, strength on the turn and passing ability, Tevez scored one and set up the other three of Boca's goals in their 4-2 aggregate win over Cobreloa of Chile. His combination with the tricky Guillermo Barros Schelotto is Boca's best hope of exposing America's defensive weaknesses.

The other Colombian side, Independiente Medellin, are stronger at the back, though promising keeper David Gonzalez seems unhappy diving left.

Onwards...America have been powered by the goals of Castillo (left) and Vasquez

Independiente eliminated Brazilians Gremio, whose attacking partnership of Christian and Luis Mario had proved too much for defending champions Olimpia in the second round. But the duo hardly had a kick against the splendid defending of Felipe Baloy and Luis Perea, who were well protected by the midfield covering of Jhon Restrepo and Jhon Jaramillo.

The Colombian champions are compact, move the ball well and break with speed and skill. They will provide interesting opposition to the quest of Santos to win the title for the first time in 40 years.

The Brazilian champions are the only unbeaten side left in the field, and have scored a sparkling 25 goals in their 10 games. But centre-forward and competition top scorer Ricardo Oliveira missed the quarter-finals through injury and may not make the semis. Santos have no adequate replacement, and to make matters worse, winger Robinho is struggling for form.

It all means that 18-year-old playmaker Diego is carrying an extraordinary burden. With the lack of options in front of him he is forced to be more individualistic. He is enjoying an excellent tournament, as is midfield dynamo Renato, who is now being referred to as the unsung hero so often that the expression is starting to lose validity.

Tim Vickery

Quarter-finals, 2nd legs

May 27 - Cali
America 4 (Vasquez 29, 35, Castillo 42, L F Moreno 90)
River Plate 1 (Luduena 68)
HT: 3-0. **Ref:** Mendez (Uru)
Sent off: Virviescas 45min, Asprilla 85min (both America); C Husain 85min, D Husain 85min, Garce 90min (all River)
America 5-3 on agg

May 28 - Buenos Aires
Boca Juniors 2 (Donnet 7, Tevez 14)
Cobreloa 1 (Galaz 26)
HT: 2-1. **Ref:** Simon (Bra)
Boca 4-2 on agg

May 28 - Santos
Santos 1 (Robinho 13)
Cruz Azul 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Gonzalez (Par)
Sent off: Brown 90min
Santos 3-2 on agg

May 29 - Medellin
Independiente Medellin 2 (Serna 28, Vasquez 90)
Gremio 1 (Anderson 30)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Larrionda (Uru)
Independiente 4-3 on agg

Semi-finals draw

Boca Juniors v America
Santos v Independiente Medellin

ARGENTINA

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

Friday, May 2

Newell's Old Boys 2 (Silvani pen 57, M Rosales 64)
San Lorenzo 1 (Morel Rodriguez 59)

Saturday, May 3

Arsenal 0
Independiente 0

Huracan 1 (Alonso 36)
Rosario Central 2 (Sanchez 69, Barros Schelotto 83)

Sunday, May 4

Estudiantes 2 (Farias 18, 88)
Talleres Cordoba 1 (Plaza 35)

Olimpo 2 (Laspada 57, C Castillo 61)
Gimnasia LP 3 (Sanguinetti pen 55, Enria 60, G Castillo 83)

Racing Club 0
Lanus 2 (Diaz 7, 80)

River Plate 1 (Cavenaghi 55)
Nueva Chicago 1 (Amaya 71)

Velez Sarsfield 2 (Cubero 27, Sena 34)
Boca Juniors 0

Friday, May 9

Gimnasia LP 0
Racing Club 0

Saturday, May 10

Independiente 2 (Insua pen 31, Pusineri 70)
Talleres Cordoba 1 (Real 32)

Lanus 4 (Mannara 3, Moreno pen 21, Garcia 26, Benitez 90)
Newell's Old Boys 2 (Domizi 14, Silvani pen 43)

Rosario Central 0
Arsenal 0

San Lorenzo 0
Velez Sarsfield 2 (Valdemarin 46, Nanni pen 89)

Sunday, May 11

Banfield 2 (Moreno y Fabianesi pen 18, Colautti 61)
Chacarita Juniors 1 (Pena 89)

Boca Juniors 2 (Barros Schelotto pen 13, Tevez 64)
Colon Santa Fe 0

Nueva Chicago 4 (Ceballos 4, Carreno 15, 41, Amaya 43)
Huracan 2 (Alonso 84, Hirsig 90)

Olimpo 2 (Laspada pen 12, pen 66)
Estudiantes 2 (Farias 6, pen 80)

Union Santa Fe 1 (Capria 32)
River Plate 1 (L Gonzalez 16)

Saturday, May 17

Chacarita Juniors 1 (Torales 80)
Union Santa Fe 1 (Capria 4)

Colon Santa Fe 0
Banfield 0

Friday, May 23

Estudiantes 0
Independiente 0

Huracan 0
Union Santa Fe 3 (Gonzalez 43, Islas 55, Gimenez 73)

Saturday, May 24

Arsenal 1 (Romero 66)
Nueva Chicago 1 (Ceballos 28)

Chacarita Juniors 0
Boca Juniors 2 (Schiavi pen 68, Tevez 90)

Colon Santa Fe 0
San Lorenzo 1 (Chatruc 45)

Newell's Old Boys 1 (Silvani 9)
Gimnasia LP 1 (Gonzalez 87)

Racing Club 0
Olimpo 2 (Castillo 48, 55)

River Plate 2 (D Husain 11, Cavenaghi 54)
Banfield 1 (Colautti 72)

Talleres Cordoba 2 (Devallis 9, Bustos 45)
Rosario Central 2 (Delgado 22, Figueroa 37)

Velez Sarsfield 4 (Nanni 45, 71, Gracian 57, Benitez og 80)
Lanus 0

ARGENTINA - CLOSING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Velez Sarsfield	13	10	1	2	23	7	31
Boca Juniors	13	10	1	2	22	8	31
River Plate	13	9	3	1	27	10	30
Rosario Central	13	6	5	2	24	16	23
Nueva Chicago	13	5	4	4	22	20	19
Gimnasia LP	13	5	4	4	18	20	19
Olimpo	13	5	3	5	18	15	18
Racing Club	13	5	3	5	16	15	18
Union Santa Fe	13	4	5	4	17	13	17
Newell's OB	13	4	5	4	18	20	17
Lanus	13	5	2	6	16	19	17
Colon Santa Fe	13	3	7	3	9	9	16
Estudiantes	13	4	4	5	15	16	16
San Lorenzo	13	4	4	5	17	21	16
Independiente	13	3	5	5	11	18	14
Arsenal	13	2	7	4	5	9	13
Talleres Cordoba	13	3	4	6	13	18	13
Banfield	13	3	3	7	13	19	12
Chacarita Jnrs	13	2	3	8	8	17	9
Huracan	13	0	3	10	10	32	3

LEADING GOALSCORERS

11 Roberto Nanni (Velez Sarsfield)
9 Luciano Figueroa (Rosario Central)
8 Cristian Castillo (Olimpo)
8 Fernando Cavenaghi (River Plate)
8 Ernesto Farias (Estudiantes)

BOLIVIA

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Apr 25: Bolivar 1 San Jose 2.
Apr 26: Aurora 2 Iberoamericana 0.
Apr 27: Blooming 1 Independiente 1; Guabira 1 Jorge Wilstermann 6; The Strongest 2 Real Potosi 1; Union Central 2 Oriente 1.
May 2: Real Potosi 8 Guabira 1.
May 3: Oriente 6 Aurora 2.
May 4: Iberoamericana 3 Bolivar 5; Independiente 1 Union Central 1; San Jose 1 The Strongest 1; Jorge Wilstermann 2 Blooming 0.
May 7: Oriente 5 The Strongest 0.
May 9: Guabira 1 The Strongest 2.
May 10: Blooming 0 Real Potosi 3; Iberoamericana 2 San Jose 1.
May 11: Aurora 3 Independiente 1; Bolivar 4 Oriente 0; Union Central 0 Jorge Wilstermann 0.
May 16: San Jose 2 Guabira 0.
May 17: Oriente 4 Iberoamericana 1.
May 18: Real Potosi 2 Union Central 0; The Strongest 2 Blooming 1; Jorge Wilstermann 2 Aurora 2.
May 19: Independiente 2 Bolivar 3.
May 23: The Strongest 0 Union Central 0.
May 24: Oriente 5 San Jose 1.
May 25: Guabira 0 Blooming 0; Independiente 0 Iberoamericana 1; Real Potosi 5 Aurora 4; Jorge Wilstermann 1 Bolivar 0.

BOLIVIA - OPENING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
J Wilstermann	12	7	4	1	24	10	25
Bolivar	12	7	3	2	29	11	24
The Strongest	12	5	6	1	19	15	21
Real Potosi	12	5	4	3	27	18	19
San Jose	12	5	3	4	19	18	18
Oriente	12	5	2	5	29	23	17
Iberoamericana	12	5	2	5	20	26	17
Blooming	12	4	3	5	18	19	15
Union Central	12	2	8	2	12	12	14
Aurora	12	3	4	5	24	28	13
Independiente	12	1	4	7	11	29	7
Guabira	12	0	3	9	7	30	3

BRAZIL

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Apr 26: Parana 3 Bahia 1; Guarani 1 Cruzeiro 1; Vitoria 0 Internacional 3; Atletico Mineiro 1 Coritiba 2.
Apr 27: Gremio 0 Fluminense 1; Corinthians 1 Flamengo 1; Vasco da Gama 1 Sao Caetano 0; Goias 7 Juventude 0; Paysandu 5 Sao Paulo 2; Santos 4 Fortaleza 0; Atletico Paranaense 5 Criciuma 2; Figueirense 0 Ponte Preta 0.
May 3: Flamengo 2 Vitoria 1; Bahia 2 Gremio 1; Cruzeiro 5 Atletico Paranaense 2.
May 4: Fluminense 0 Vasco da Gama 0; Fortaleza 1 Corinthians 2; Sao Paulo 3 Figueirense 2; Sao Caetano 2 Paysandu 0; Internacional 2 Goias 1; Ponte Preta 2 Atletico Mineiro 1; Juventude 1 Guarani 1; Coritiba 2 Parana 1; Criciuma 1 Santos 3.
May 10: Goias 1 Flamengo 1; Corinthians 3 Criciuma 0; Santos 0 Cruzeiro 2; Parana 3 Ponte Preta 2.
May 11: Vasco da Gama 1 Bahia 1; Paysandu 2 Fluminense 2; Atletico Mineiro 2 Sao Paulo 2; Vitoria 2 Fortaleza 1; Gremio 1 Coritiba 0; Guarani 3 Internacional 0; Atletico Paranaense 2 Juventude 0; Figueirense 3 Sao Caetano 0.
May 17: Fluminense 3 Figueirense 0; Juventude 1 Santos 1; Sao Caetano 2 Atletico Mineiro 0.
May 18: Bahia 2 Paysandu 0; Sao Paulo 2 Parana 0; Flamengo 1 Guarani 1; Coritiba 1 Vasco da Gama 1; Fortaleza 1 Goias 0; Cruzeiro 1 Corinthians 1; Ponte Preta 2 Gremio 1; Criciuma 1 Vitoria 1; Internacional 1 Atletico Paranaense 1.
May 24: Atletico Mineiro 3 Fluminense 0; Corinthians 3 Juventude 0; Vasco da Gama 1 Ponte Preta 0; Parana 1 Sao Caetano 1.
May 25: Atletico Paranaense 4 Flamengo 1; Paysandu 1 Coritiba 3; Goias 0 Criciuma 2; Gremio 1 Sao Paulo 2; Guarani 2 Fortaleza 1; Figueirense 1 Bahia 0; Vitoria 2 Cruzeiro 1; Santos 2 Internacional 1.

BRAZIL - NATIONAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cruzeiro	10	6	3	1	27	14	21
Internacional*	10	5	2	3	14	12	19
Santos	10	5	3	2	17	9	18
Sao Paulo	10	5	3	2	22	19	18
At Mineiro	10	5	2	3	19	13	17
Corinthians	10	4	4	2	22	14	16
Guarani	10	4	3	3	17	13	15
Parana	10	4	3	3	16	13	15
Vitoria	10	4	3	3	13	14	15
At Paranaense	10	4	2	4	18	16	14
Coritiba	10	4	2	4	14	13	14
Sao Caetano	10	3	5	2	13	12	14
Flamengo	10	3	5	2	14	14	14
Vasco da Gama	10	3	4	3	16	17	13
Fluminense	10	3	4	3	11	13	13
Criciuma	10	3	3	4	13	17	12
Gremio	10	3	2	5	11	13	11
Bahia	10	3	2	5	12	15	11
Figueirense	10	2	4	4	11	14	10
Juventude*	10	1	4	5	8	22	10
Ponte Preta*	10	3	4	3	13	15	9
Fortaleza	10	2	3	5	8	15	9
Paysandu	10	2	3	5	18	26	9
Goias	10	1	3	6	18	22	6

**Ponte Preta have been docked the 4pts gained from the 1-1 draw with Internacional and the 1-0 win over Juventude for fielding an ineligible player in each game; Internacional were awarded two extra points (ie the equivalent of a win), and Juventude received three points. However, the won-drawn-lost and goals records were not altered*

CHILE

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Apr 26: U Catolica 1 Rangers 3; Union Espanola 2 Coquimbo Unido 1; Palestino 1 U de Chile 0.
Apr 27: Huachipato 2 Dep Temuco 3; Cobresal 1 Santiago Wanderers 2; San Felipe 2 U de Concepcion 0; Colo Colo 1 Puerto Montt 1.
Apr 28: Audax Italiano 3 Cobreloa 2.
May 2: Dep Temuco 5 Colo Colo 1.
May 3: Santiago Wanderers 3 Audax Italiano 0; Coquimbo Unido 1 U Catolica 3; Cobreloa 2 Union Espanola 1.
May 4: Huachipato 1 San Felipe 0; Puerto Montt 3 Cobresal 0; U de Chile 2 U de Concepcion 3; Rangers 2 Palestino 1.
May 9: Audax Italiano 3 Puerto Montt 4.
May 10: Palestino 1 Coquimbo Unido 0; Union Espanola 2 Santiago Wanderers 1; San Felipe 0 U de Chile 0; Colo Colo 2 Huachipato 1.
May 11: Cobresal 5 Dep Temuco 0; U Catolica 3 Cobreloa 1; U de Concepcion 5 Rangers 0.
May 16: Cobreloa 1 Palestino 0; Huachipato 1 Cobresal 0.
May 17: Colo Colo 4 San Felipe 2; Rangers 2 U de Chile 2.
May 18: Puerto Montt 2 Union Espanola 3; Santiago Wanderers 0 U Catolica 2; Dep Temuco 2 Audax Italiano 3; Coquimbo Unido 0 U de Concepcion 1.
May 23: Cobresal 1 Colo Colo 0.
May 24: U de Chile 4 Coquimbo Unido 3; U Catolica 1 Puerto Montt 1; U de Concepcion 2 Cobreloa 1; Audax Italiano 1 Huachipato 2.
May 25: Palestino 1 Santiago Wanderers 1; Union Espanola 3 Dep Temuco 1; San Felipe 1 Rangers 1.

CHILE: GROUP 1 - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cobreloa	15	10	1	4	26	16	31
Huachipato	15	6	3	6	22	22	21
Union Espanola	15	5	3	7	24	32	18
Palestino	15	5	2	8	18	28	17

GROUP 2 - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Puerto Montt	15	7	4	4	26	22	25
U de Chile	15	4	8	3	30	24	20
San Felipe	15	3	4	8	13	26	13
Coquimbo Unido	15	2	2	11	12	30	8

GROUP 3 - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Audax Italiano	15	8	2	5	37	30	26
Cobresal	15	6	3	6	27	19	21
Rangers	15	3	11	1	28	26	20
Sant Wanderers	15	5	4	6	24	23	19

GROUP 4 - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
U de Concepcion	15	7	3	5	29	21	24
U Catolica	15	6	6	3	27	20	24
Colo Colo	15	6	5	4	28	23	23
Dep Temuco	15	5	3	7	24	33	18

Top two from each group and the three third-placed sides with most points qualify for knockout phase; the third-placed side with fewest points (San Felipe) meet the fourth-placed side with most points (Santiago Wanderers) in a qualifying play-off

COLOMBIA

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

1st stage

Apr 16: Indep Medellin 3 At Junior 0.
Apr 27: Quindio 2 Indep Santa Fe 1; Magdalena 2 Indep Medellin 0; Millonarios 3 Tolima 1; Once Caldas 2 Dep Pasto 1; Envigado 0 Dep Cali 1; America 2 Bucaramanga 1; Centauros 3 Pereira 3; At Huila 1 At Junior 0; At Nacional 1 Tulua 2.
May 1: Indep Santa Fe 2 Tulua 0; At Junior 2 At Nacional 0; Pereira 1 At Huila 0; Bucaramanga 1 Centauros 0; Dep Cali 1 America 0; Dep Pasto 2 Envigado 2; Tolima 3 Once Caldas 2; Indep Medellin 2 Millonarios 0; Quindio 1 Magdalena 2.
May 4: Magdalena 1 Indep Santa Fe 0; Millonarios 1 Quindio 0; Once Caldas 3 Indep Medellin 3; Envigado 2 Tolima 1; Tulua 0 At Junior 0; America 1 Dep Pasto 1; At Huila 2 Bucaramanga 1; Centauros 2 Dep Cali 1; At Nacional 0 Pereira 1.

COLOMBIA: OPENING 1ST STAGE - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Once Caldas	18	10	5	3	26	15	35
Millonarios	18	8	7	3	23	14	31
America	18	8	7	3	31	23	31
Centauros	18	7	8	3	24	21	29
Dep Cali	18	8	4	6	27	22	28
At Junior	18	8	3	7	19	18	27
Magdalena	18	7	5	6	22	22	26
Pereira	18	7	5	6	22	25	26
At Huila	18	6	8	4	22	22	26
Indep Medellin	18	7	4	7	29	23	25
Bucaramanga	18	6	7	5	21	20	25
Tolima	18	6	4	8	24	24	22
Envigado	18	6	4	8	20	23	22
At Nacional	18	6	2	10	17	20	20
Dep Pasto	18	4	7	7	15	18	19
Indep Santa Fe	18	5	3	10	15	23	18
Tulua	18	2	9	7	15	24	15
Quindio	18	3	4	11	13	28	13

Top eight qualified for play-offs

Play-offs

May 10: Magdalena 1 Dep Cali 1; America 1 Once Caldas 3; Centauros 0 Pereira 3; At Junior 2 Millonarios 1.
May 14: Dep Cali 3 America 0; Once Caldas 4 Magdalena 0; Pereira 0 At Junior 2; Millonarios 1 Centauros 1.
May 18: Dep Cali 0 Once Caldas 3; Magdalena 0 America 1; Pereira 1 Millonarios 0; Centauros 1 At Junior 0.
May 25: America 4 Magdalena 1; Millonarios 1 Pereira 1; At Junior 1 Centauros 1.
May 26: Once Caldas 1 Dep Cali 1.

OPENING PLAY-OFFS - GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Once Caldas	4	3	1	0	11	2	10
America	4	2	0	2	6	7	6
Dep Cali	4	1	2	1	5	5	5
Union Magdalena	4	0	1	3	2	10	1

OPENING PLAY-OFFS - GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
At Junior	4	2	1	1	5	3	7
Pereira	4	2	1	1	5	3	7
Centauros	4	1	2	1	3	5	5
Millonarios	4	0	2	2	3	5	2

ECUADOR

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Apr 23: Espoli 0 Tecnico Universitario 2; Barcelona 2 Manta 0; El Nacional 1 Aucas 1; LDU Quito 0 Dep Quito 4; Dep Cuenca 1 Emelec 1.
May 4: Tecnico Universitario 2 Espoli 3; Dep Quito 0 LDU Quito 2; Aucas 1 El Nacional 1; Manta 0 Barcelona 1; Emelec 2 Dep Cuenca 2.
May 9: Dep Cuenca 3 Tecnico Universitario 1.
May 10: El Nacional 1 Dep Quito 2; LDU Quito 3 Manta 2; Emelec 1 Barcelona 1.
May 11: Espoli 1 Aucas 2.
May 14: Aucas 0 Dep Cuenca 0; Dep Quito 2 Espoli 1; Barcelona 0 LDU Quito 0; Tecnico Universitario 1 Emelec 2; Manta 2 El Nacional 2.
May 18: El Nacional 2 Barcelona 3; Espoli 0 Manta 0; Dep Cuenca 1 Deportivo Quito 1; Tecnico Universitario 2 Aucas 1; Emelec 3 LDU Quito 2.
May 23: Dep Quito 2 Tecnico Universitario 0.
May 24: Barcelona 5 Espoli 2.
May 25: LDU Quito 2 El Nacional 0; Aucas 4 Emelec 0; Manta 2 Dep Cuenca 2.

ECUADOR - OPENING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Barcelona	14	10	2	2	32	15	32
LDU Quito	14	7	5	2	23	18	26
El Nacional	14	6	4	4	24	17	22
Dep Quito	14	6	3	5	22	19	21
Dep Cuenca	14	4	7	3	23	18	19
Emelec	14	4	6	4	18	26	18
Aucas	14	4	4	6	18	16	16
Tecnico Univ	14	3	4	7	19	26	13
Manta	14	3	3	8	15	28	12
Espoli	14	3	2	9	20	31	11

PARAGUAY

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Play-offs

Apr 26: Tacuary 2 Olimpia 0; Guarani 1 Sol de America 0.
May 1: Guarani 2 Cerro Porteno 1.
May 4: Libertad 0 Tacuary 0.
May 11: Libertad 2 Olimpia 0; Cerro Porteno 2 Sol de America 4.

OPENING PLAY-OFFS: GROUP A - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Libertad*	2	1	1	0	2	0	6
Tacuary	2	1	1	0	2	0	4
Olimpia	2	0	0	2	0	4	0

OPENING PLAY-OFFS: GROUP B -

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Guarani	2	2	0	0	3-	1	6
Sol de America	2	1	0	1	4-	3	3
Cerro Porteno*	2	0	0	2	3-	6	2

**Libertad and Cerro Porteno were awarded two bonus points for finishing in the top two in the 1st stage table*

Group winners qualified for opening Final

Final

1st leg - May 18
Guarani 0
Libertad 0

2nd leg - May 25
Libertad 1 (Morinigo 67)
Guarani 0
HT: 0-0
Libertad 1-0 on agg

PERU

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Apr 26: Alianza Lima 3 Sporting Cristal 0.
Apr 27: Sport Boys 5 Union Huaral 0; Cienciano 2 At Universidad 0; Estudiantes 0 Universitario 1; Melgar 1 Dep Wanka 1; Alianza Atletico 1 Coronel Bolognesi 1.
May 1: Coronel Bolognesi 2 Alianza Lima 2.
May 3: Sporting Cristal 1 Dep Wanka 1; Cienciano 1 Sport Boys 0.
May 4: Coronel Bolognesi 0 Melgar 2; At Universidad 1 Universitario 1; Alianza Lima 1 Alianza Atletico 2; Union Huaral 4 Estudiantes 1.
May 7: Sport Boys 1 At Universidad 0; Universitario 2 Union Huaral 1; Estudiantes 2 Cienciano 1; Melgar 0 Alianza Lima 0; Alianza Atletico 0 Sporting Cristal 0.
May 10: Alianza Lima 2 Dep Wanka 0.
May 11: Sport Boys 3 Estudiantes 1; Alianza Atletico 2 Melgar 0; Coronel Bolognesi 1 Sporting Cristal 0; At Universidad 2 Union Huaral 2; Cienciano 2 Universitario 0.
May 14: Dep Wanka 1 Coronel Bolognesi 2.
May 17: Sporting Cristal 2 Sport Boys 1.
May 18: Estudiantes 0 Coronel Bolognesi 1; Dep Wanka 3 At Universidad 0; Universitario 2 Alianza Lima 4; Melgar 3 Cienciano 0; Union Huaral 1 Alianza Atletico 0.
May 21: Sport Boys 1 Melgar 1; Union Huaral 0 Alianza Lima 2; Estudiantes 1 Dep Wanka 1; Universitario 3 Alianza Atletico 2; At Universidad 0 Coronel Bolognesi 1; Cienciano 2 Sporting Cristal 2.
May 24: Sporting Cristal 2 Estudiantes 1.
May 25: Alianza Atletico 2 Cienciano 1; Coronel Bolognesi 2 Universitario 0; Dep Wanka 1 Union Huaral 2; Melgar 2 At Universidad 2; Alianza Lima 2 Sport Boys 1.

PERU - OPENING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Alianza Lima	15	10	4	1	26	9	34
Sporting Cristal	15	8	4	3	29	14	28
Coronel Bolognesi	15	8	4	3	20	17	28
Alianza Atletico	15	5	7	3	18	16	22
Union Huaral	15	6	3	6	19	29	21
Sport Boys	15	5	5	5	24	19	20
Universitario	15	5	5	5	18	20	20
Cienciano	15	5	4	6	15	15	19
Melgar	15	3	6	6	15	20	15
Dep Wanka	15	3	5	7	16	19	14
At Universidad	15	2	5	8	14	25	11
Estudiantes	15	3	2	10	13	24	11

URUGUAY

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Apr 25: Defensor 2 Villa Espanola 1.
Apr 26: Cerro 2 Danubio 0.
Apr 27: Plaza 1 Dep Colonia 1; Tacuarembo 1 Juventud 1; Miramar Misiones 0 River Plate 2; Liverpool 0 Penarol 3; Wanderers 3 Central Espanol 1; Dep Maldonado 2 Fenix 2.
Apr 30: Bella Vista M 0 Nacional 3.
May 2: Cerro 2 Dep Colonia 2.
May 3: Nacional 2 Juventud 0; Miramar Misiones 1 Plaza 1.
May 4: Tacuarembo 1 Villa Espanola 3; River Plate 1 Defensor 2; Liverpool 1 Bella Vista M 0; Wanderers 5 Deportivo Maldonado 3; Fenix 3 Danubio 3; Central Espanol 0 Penarol 1.
May 9: Juventud 1 Central Espanol 2.
May 10: Penarol 2 Tacuarembo 0; Dep Maldonado 2 Liverpool 1; Fenix 4 Villa Espanola 3.
May 11: Bella Vista M 1 Dep Colonia 0; Defensor 0 Nacional 3; Plaza 1 River Plate 1; Danubio 2 Wanderers 1; Cerro 2 Miramar Misiones 2.
May 16: Juventud 0 Fenix 3.
May 17: Nacional 2 Central Espanol 0; Villa Espanola 3 River Plate 0.
May 18: Danubio 1 Dep Colonia 0; Dep Maldonado 2 Tacuarembo 1; Defensor 2 Liverpool 2; Miramar Misiones 1 Wanderers 4; Plaza 1 Bella Vista M 1; Penarol 5 Cerro 1.
May 24: Miramar Misiones 4 Tacuarembo 3; Penarol 6 Fenix 3.
May 25: Central Espanol 2 Dep Colonia 1; Cerro 0 Nacional 2; River Plate 0 Dep Maldonado 1; Liverpool 3 Villa Espanola 2; Wanderers 4 Plaza 3; Danubio 1 Bella Vista M 0; Defensor 4 Juventud 2.

URUGUAY - OPENING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Nacional	13	12	1	0	24	2	37
Penarol	13	10	1	2	33	15	31
Wanderers	13	9	2	2	34	18	29
Danubio	13	7	3	3	24	15	24
Defensor	13	7	2	4	24	18	23
Fenix	13	7	2	4	32	29	23
Cerro	13	6	4	3	18	16	22
Dep Maldonado	13	5	4	4	19	22	19
Bella Vista M	13	5	3	5	20	15	18
Miramar Misiones	13	5	3	5	22	20	18
Central Espanol	13	5	2	6	12	19	17
Liverpool	13	4	3	6	16	22	15
Villa Espanola	13	3	3	7	24	28	12
River Plate	13	3	3	7	15	21	12
Tacuarembo	13	2	4	7	16	21	10
Dep Colonia	13	2	2	9	12	27	8
Plaza	13	0	6	7	10	19	6
Juventud	13	0	2	11	8	36	2

VENEZUELA

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

Apr 27: Ital-Chacao 4 Carabobo 0; Mineros Guayana 0 Caracas 1; Estudiantes 3 Monagas 1; Dep Tachira 1 Trujillanos 1.
May 4: Ital-Chacao 3 Mineros Guayana 0; Estudiantes 3 Carabobo 0; Dep Tachira 0 Caracas 3; Monagas 0 Maracaibo 0.
May 7: Trujillanos 0 Ital-Chacao 0; Caracas 1 Maracaibo 2; Carabobo 0 Dep Tachira 0; Mineros Guayana 2 Estudiantes 1.
May 11: Ital-Chacao 4 Estudiantes 0; Dep Tachira 2 Mineros Guayana 0; Maracaibo 2 Carabobo 0; Trujillanos 0 Monagas 1.
May 14: Trujillanos 0 Maracaibo 0; Monagas 2 Dep Tachira 0; Caracas 2 Estudiantes 0; Carabobo FC 0 Mineros Guayana 0.
May 18: Monagas 1 Ital-Chacao 1; Caracas 1 Trujillanos 1; Mineros Guayana 2 Maracaibo 2; Estudiantes FC 1 Dep Tachira 2.
May 21: Ital-Chacao 1 Dep Tachira 0; Maracaibo 2 Estudiantes 0; Trujillanos 1 Carabobo 2; Monagas 0 Caracas 0.
May 25: Caracas 2 Ital-Chacao 3; Carabobo 0 Monagas 0; Mineros Guayana 0 Trujillanos 1; Dep Tachira 0 Maracaibo 1.

VENEZUELA: CLOSING - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Maracaibo	16	8	7	1	21	9	31
Ital-Chacao	16	8	6	2	32	20	30
Trujillanos	16	6	7	3	17	15	25
Caracas	16	5	7	4	18	13	22
Estudiantes	16	6	4	6	23	22	22
Dep Tachira	16	4	7	5	13	16	19
Monagas	16	5	4	7	17	22	19
Mineros Guayana	16	3	4	9	16	24	13
Carabobo	16	1	6	9	9	25	9
Nacional*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

**Did not play because of financial problems*

CENTRAL & NORTH AMERICA

MEXICO

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

Apr 26: Colibries 1 Atlante 1; Jaguares 0 America 1; Tecos UAG 0 Gallos Blancos 0; Tigres 0 Atlas 0; Cruz Azul 4 Puebla 0; San Luis 0 Veracruz 3.
Apr 27: Guadalajara 1 Monterrey 1; Pachuca 0 Toluca 1; Santos 4 Pumas UNAM 1; Necaxa 3 Morelia 0.
May 3: Jaguares 0 Colibries 1; Toluca 3 Guadalajara 2; Veracruz 1 Santos 0; Morelia 0 Atlante 0; Monterrey 3 San Luis 1; Puebla 2 Tecos UAG 2; Atlas 1 Pachuca 0.
May 4: Pumas UNAM 4 Nec

GROUP 3 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Morelia	19	10	5	4	34	20	35
Cruz Azul	19	5	9	5	24	24	24
Necaxa	19	6	5	8	25	24	23
San Luis	19	5	5	9	25	38	20
Jaguares	19	5	4	10	15	26	19

GROUP 4 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Atlante	19	10	4	5	39	26	34
Veracruz	19	9	5	5	23	18	32
Guadalajara	19	8	7	4	32	24	31
Santos	19	9	3	7	30	24	30
Gallos Blancos	19	3	8	8	13	23	17

Group winners and the three runners-up with most points qualifiy for quarter-finals; the runners-up with fewest points (Cruz Azul) entered qualifying play-off with the third-placed side with most points (Guadalajara)

TOP GOALSCORERS

21 Jose Cardozo (Toluca)
16 Sebastian Gonzalez (Atlante)
13 Reinaldo Navia (Morelia)
11 Jared Borgetti (Santos)

Qualifying play-off

May 22: Cruz Azul 4 Guadalajara 1.
May 25: Guadalajara 4 Cruz Azul 1.
Agg 5-5. Guadalajara qualified on better League record

UNITED STATES

Apr 26: Columbus Crew 0 MetroStars 1; Dallas Burn 1 New England Revolution 2; Kansas City Wizards 2 Chicago Fire 3; Colorado Rapids 1 DC United 1 (aet); San Jose Earthquakes 1 Los Angeles Galaxy 0.
May 3: MetroStars 2 Colorado Rapids 1; New England Revolution 0 San Jose Earthquakes 2; DC United 0 Dallas Burn 0 (aet); Kansas City Wizards 2 Columbus Crew 2 (aet).
May 10: MetroStars 1 DC United 0; New England Revolution 2 Los Angeles Galaxy 0; Columbus Crew 2 Colorado Rapids 0; Chicago Fire 0 San Jose Earthquakes 0 (aet); Dallas Burn 1 Kansas City Wizards 3.
May 14: Kansas City Wizards 1 New England Revolution 1 (aet).
May 17: New England Revolution 3 Chicago Fire 0; DC United 1 Kansas City Wizards 1 (aet); Dallas Burn 1 Los Angeles Galaxy 1 (aet); Colorado Rapids 0 MetroStars 2; San Jose Earthquakes 4 Columbus Crew 3.
May 24: MetroStars 2 Dallas Burn 1; Columbus Crew 2 New England Revolution 3; Kansas City Wizards 2 Los Angeles Galaxy 1.
May 25: Chicago Fire 4 Colorado Rapids 0.

USA – EASTERN CONFERENCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
MetroStars	7	5	1	1	9	4	16
New England	8	4	2	2	13	9	14
Columbus Crew	8	3	2	3	13	12	11
Chicago Fire	6	2	3	1	8	6	9
DC United	6	0	4	2	4	6	4

USA – WESTERN CONFERENCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
San Jose	6	4	2	0	10	5	14
Kansas City	8	3	4	1	15	12	13
LA Galaxy	7	0	4	3	5	9	4
Dallas Burn	6	0	3	3	5	9	3
Colorado Rapids	6	0	1	5	3	13	1

LEADING GOALSCORERS

6 Taylor Twellman (New England Revolution)
4 Clint Mathis (MetroStars)
4 Brian McBride (Columbus Crew)
4 Preki (Kansas City Wizards)

AFRICA

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

1st rnd, 2nd legs

Apr 25: Al Ittihad (Lby) 0 Hassania Agadir (Mor) 0 *Agg 0-0. Hassania 5-4 on pens.*
Apr 26: Al Merreikh (Sud) 4 Canon Yaounde (Cam) 0 *Canon 5-4 on agg*; Nzoia Sugar (Ken) 1 Zamalek (Egy) 4 *Zamalek 7-1 on agg*; Rayon Sport (Rwa) 2 Esperance (Tun) 2 *Esperance 7-2 on agg*; US Mbila Nziami (Gab) 0 FC St Eloi Lupopo (DRC) 3 *St Eloi 3-1 on agg*; Zanaco (Zam) 0 Ismaili (Egy) 0 *Ismaili 1-0 on agg.*
Apr 27: AS Douanes (Tog) 1 Hearts of Oak (Gha) 3 *Hearts of Oak 4-1 on agg*; AS Niamey (Ngr) 2 ASEC Abidjan (IvC) 2 *ASEC 5-2 on agg*; AS Police (Con) 2 Stade Malien (Mli) 1 *Agg 2-2. Stade Malien on away goals*; AS Port Louis 2000 (Mrs) 2 Ferroviario Maputo (Moz) 0 *Agg 2-2. AS Port Louis 3-1 on pens*; ASFA Yenenga (BuF) 1 Jeanne d'Arc (Sen) 0 *Jeanne d'Arc 2-1 on agg*; Satellite (Gui) 2 Enyimba (Nig) 5 *Enyimba 8-2 on agg*; SC Villa (Uga) 0 AS Aviacao (Ang) 2 *AS Aviacao 3-2 on agg*; Simba SC (Tan) 0 Santos (SAf) 0 *Agg 0-0. Simba 9-8 on pens*; Wallidan (Gam) 2 USM Alger (Alg) 1 *USM Alger 3-2 on agg.*
May 17: St Louisienne (Reu) 1 Highlanders (Zim) 1 *Highlanders 4-2 on agg.*

2nd rnd, 1st legs

May 18: AS Aviacao 3 Hearts of Oak 0; AS Port Louis 2000 0 Ismaili 1; Enyimba 4 Jeanne d'Arc 0; Hassania Agadir 0 ASEC Abidjan 0; Simba SC 1 Zamalek 0; FC St Eloi Lupopo 0 Canon Yaounde 0; Stade Malien 1 USM Alger 1.
May 24: Highlanders 1 Esperance 1.

CUP-WINNERS CUP

1st rnd, 2nd legs

Apr 25: ASC Nasr de Sebkha (Mra) 0 Wydad Casablanca (Mor) 0 *Wydad 2-0 on agg*; Police FC (Uga) 0 Baladeyet Al Mehalla (Egy) 0 *Baladeyet 4-1 on agg.*
Apr 26: Al Hilal (Lby) 1 Widad Tlemcan (Alg) 0 *Agg 2-2. Al Hilal on away goals*; Anse Reunion (Sey) 2 Kenya Pipeline (Ken) 1 *Agg 3-3. Kenya Pipeline 9-8 on pens*; Dyto de Lome (Tog) 1 Africa Sports (IvC) 2 *Africa Sports 3-2 on agg*; Hafia (Gui) 3 Maghreb Fes (Mor) 0 *Hafia 3-2 on agg*; Power Dynamos (Zam) 0 Olympique Moka (Mrs) 0 *Power Dynamos 3-1 on agg.*
Apr 27: Akonangui (EqG) 1 Mount Cameroon (Cam) 0 *Mount Cameroon 2-1 on agg*; Al Hilal (Sud) 2 Insurance (Eth) 0 *Al Hilal 4-0 on agg*; APR FC (Rwa) 8 US Kenya (DRC) 0 *APR 9-2 on agg*; Club Olympique (Mli) 1 AS Douanes (Sen) 0 *Club Olympique 3-0 on agg*; Jeunesse Sportive (Gab) 0 Julius Berger (Nig) 4 *Julius Berger 8-0 on agg*; Jomo Cosmos (SAf) 0 Costa do Sol (Moz) 3 *Costa do Sol 4-0 on agg*; Petro Atletico (Ang) 1 Etoile du Congo (Con) 1 *Etoile du Congo 2-1 on agg.*

2nd rnd, 1st legs

May 17: Al Hilal (Lby) 2 Wydad Casablanca 2; Etoile Sahel (Tun) 4 Club Olympique 0; Kenya Pipeline 0 Power Dynamos 2.
May 18: Africa Sports 1 Hafia 2; APR FC 3 Etoile du Congo 0; Baladeyet 4 Al Hilal (Sud) 2; Costa do Sol 1 Julius Berger 1; Mount Cameroon 2 Asante Kotoko (Gha) 2.

CAF CUP

1st rnd, 2nd legs

Apr 25: Anassar (Lby) 1 Coffee FC (Eth) 0 *Anassar 1-0 on agg*; Kiyovu Sport (Rwa) 2 Khartoum (Sud) 0 *Kiyovu 3-1 on agg*; Maranatha de Fiokpo (Tog) 0 Cotonsport (Cam) 0 *Agg 0-0. Cotonsport 4-2 on pens.*
Apr 26: AS Sonacos (Sen) 0 AS Kaloum (Gui) 0 *Agg 0-0. AS Sonacos 5-4 on pens*; Club Africain (Tun) 2 Requins Atlantique (Ben) 0 *Club Africain 2-1 on agg*; Djoliba (Mli) 3 FC 105 Libreville (Gab) 1 *FC 105 4-3 on agg*; Express (Uga) 1 Green Buffaloes (Zam) 1 *Green Buffaloes 3-2 on agg*; Mamelodi Sundowns (SAf) 2 Primeiro Agosto (Ang) 0 *Agg 2-2. Mamelodi 9-8 on pens*; Raja Casablanca (Mor) 4 Etoile Filante (BuF) 0 *Raja 7-2 on agg.*
Apr 27: Black Rhinos (Zim) 0 Maxaquene (Moz) 0 *Agg 1-1. Black Rhinos on away goals*; Dominan'i Soavina Atsimondrano (Mad) 0 St Michel United (Sey) 1 *St Michel 1-0 on agg*; JCA (IvC) 1 CS La Mancha (Con) 1 *JCA 2-1 on agg*; Renacimiento (EqG) 0 Daring Club Motema Pembe (DRC) 3 *Daring Club 7-1 on agg.*

Byes: JS Kabylie (Alg), Al Ahly (Egy)

2nd rnd, 1st legs

May 16: Anassar 1 Al Ahly 2.
May 17: AS Sonacos 1 JS Kabylie 1; Enugu Rangers (Nig) 2 Daring Club Motema Pembe 0; FC 105 Libreville 2 Raja Casablanca 1; Green Buffaloes 5 St Michel United 0; JCA 2 Club Africain 0; Kiyovu Sport 1 Black Rhinos 0.
May 18: Mamelodi Sundowns 1 Cotonsport 0.

ASIA

INDIA

INDIA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
East Bengal	22	15	4	3	44	22	49
Salgaocar	22	13	5	4	43	17	44
Vasco	22	12	7	3	40	21	43
JCT Mills	22	11	5	6	34	21	38
Churchill Bros	22	10	7	5	33	22	37
Dempo	22	10	5	7	34	29	35
Mohun Bagan	22	9	6	7	35	25	33
Mahindra Utd	22	7	5	10	27	30	26
Tollygunge A	22	6	5	11	29	38	23
Indian Bank	22	6	2	14	31	53	20
Hindustan Aero	22	3	2	17	17	54	11
Indian Telephone	22	1	5	16	14	49	8

JAPAN

FIRST STAGE

Apr 26: Vegalta Sendai 0 Gamba Osaka 2; Jubilo Iwata 1 Vissel Kobe 0; Nagoya Grampus Eight 1 Kashiwa Reysol 1; Kyoto Purple Sanga 0 Shimizu S-Pulse 3; Cerezo Osaka 6 Urawa Reds 4; Kashima Antlers 2 FC Tokyo 0; Tokyo Verdy 1969 0 Oita Trinita 2; JEF United Ichihara 3 Yokohama F Marinos 1.
Apr 29: Yokohama F Marinos 0 Nagoya Grampus Eight 0; Vissel Kobe 0 FC Tokyo 1; Vegalta Sendai 1 Jubilo Iwata 1; JEF United Ichihara 5 Kyoto Purple Sanga 1; Shimizu S-Pulse 0 Kashiwa Reysol 2; Tokyo Verdy 1969 0 Urawa Reds 2; Oita Trinita 1 Cerezo Osaka 2; Gamba Osaka 1 Kashima Antlers 2.
May 5: FC Tokyo 1 Gamba Osaka 0; Jubilo Iwata 7 Tokyo Verdy 1969 2; Cerezo Osaka 1 JEF United Ichihara 3; Kashima Antlers 1 Yokohama F Marinos 3; Nagoya Grampus Eight 2 Oita Trinita 1; Urawa Reds 1 Shimizu S-Pulse 0; Kashiwa Reysol 0 Vissel Kobe 1; Kyoto Purple Sanga 1 Vegalta Sendai 0.
May 10: JEF United Ichihara 1 Nagoya Grampus Eight 2; Gamba Osaka 2 Kashiwa Reysol 3; Yokohama F Marinos 3 FC Tokyo 2; Tokyo Verdy 1969 1 Shimizu S-Pulse 2; Vegalta Sendai 1 Cerezo Osaka 2; Oita Trinita 1 Kashima Antlers 1.
May 11: Jubilo Iwata 5 Kyoto Purple Sanga 0; Vissel Kobe 3 Urawa Reds 2.
May 17: Urawa Reds 4 Gamba Osaka 4; Kashima Antlers 0 JEF United Ichihara 2; Kyoto Purple Sanga 2 Tokyo Verdy 1969 5; Kashiwa Reysol 3 Yokohama F Marinos 1; FC Tokyo 2 Oita Trinita 1; Cerezo Osaka 1 Jubilo Iwata 3.
May 18: Nagoya Grampus Eight 2 Vegalta Sendai 1; Shimizu S-Pulse 3 Vissel Kobe 0.
May 24: Kyoto Purple Sanga 2 Cerezo Osaka 4; Vegalta Sendai 0 Kashima Antlers 2; Tokyo Verdy 1969 3 Vissel Kobe 2; JEF United Ichihara 0 FC Tokyo 0; Jubilo Iwata 1 Nagoya Grampus Eight 1; Oita Trinita 0 Kashiwa Reysol 0.
May 25: Yokohama F Marinos 0 Urawa Reds 1; Gamba Osaka 1 Shimizu S-Pulse 0.

JAPAN – 1ST STAGE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Jubilo Iwata	10	6	3	1	24	10	21
JEF United	10	6	2	2	23	12	20
Kashima Antlers	10	6	1	3	14	10	19
Grampus Eight	10	4	6	0	12	8	18
Yokohama FM	10	5	2	3	17	13	17
Kashiwa Reysol	10	5	2	3	15	11	17
Cerezo Osaka	10	5	1	4	23	22	16
FC Tokyo	10	4	3	3	10	10	15
Urawa Reds	10	4	2	4	17	17	14
Gamba Osaka	10	3	3	4	18	18	12
Vissel Kobe	10	4	0	6	11	14	12
Vegalta Sendai	10	3	2	5	10	13	11
Shimizu S-Pulse	10	3	1	6	15	17	10
Tokyo Verdy	10	3	0	7	14	24	9
Oita Trinita	10	2	2	6	9	15	8
Kyoto PS	10	2	0	8	9	27	6

SOUTH KOREA

Apr 26: Ulsan 0 Anyang 3; Suwon 1 Chonbuk 1; Songnam 2 Pohang 0.
Apr 27: Daegu 2 Busan 0; Daejeon 3 Chunnam 2; Gwangju 2 Bucheon 1.
Apr 30: Bucheon 1 Daegu 1; Pohang 2 Gwangju 1; Chonbuk 0 Songnam 3; Suwon 1 Chunnam 1; Anyang 0 Daejeon 0; Busan 3 Ulsan 2.
May 4: Daegu 0 Chonbuk 1; Chunnam 2 Pohang 1; Anyang 2 Bucheon 1; Busan 2 Gwangju 3; Ulsan 0 Seongnam 0; Daejeon 2 Suwon 0.
May 10: Ulsan 3 Daejeon 0.
May 11: Pohang 2 Daegu 1; Chonbuk 2 Bucheon 1; Gwangju 2 Chunnam 1; Anyang 0 Songnam 3; Busan 1 Suwon 2.
May 17: Songnam 1 Chunnam 2; Gwangju 2 Chonbuk 3.
May 18: Daejeon 1 Busan 0; Daegu 1 Ulsan 1; Suwon 3 Anyang 1; Bucheon 1 Pohang 1.
May 21: Daegu 2 Daejeon 1; Suwon 0 Ulsan 0; Songnam 0 Busan 0; Gwangju 1 Anyang 4; Bucheon 2 Chunnam 2; Pohang 1 Chonbuk 2.
May 24: Bucheon 1 Chunnam 1; Ulsan 3 Suwon 1.
May 25: Chonbuk 2 Pohang 2; Anyang 0 Gwangju 0; Daejeon 2 Daegu 0.

SOUTH KOREA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Songnam	11	8	2	1	20	6	26
Daejeon	12	7	2	3	14	9	23
Chonbuk	12	6	4	2	19	14	22
Anyang	12	5	5	2	17	13	20
Ulsan	12	5	3	4	16	14	18
Suwon	12	4	5	3	11	11	17
Chunnam	12	3	6	3	15	14	15
Pohang	12	3	3	6	16	20	12
Gwangju	12	3	3	6	13	19	12
Daegu	12	2	5	5	9	13	11
Busan	11	3	2	6	11	19	11
Bucheon	12	0	4	8	11	20	4

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

Championship play-offs

Apr 25: Northern Spirit 0 Perth Glory 3.
Apr 27: Sydney Olympic 3 Adelaide City 1; Parramatta Power 3 Newcastle Utd 2.
May 2: Newcastle Utd 0 Adelaide City 1.
May 3: Perth Glory 6 Parramatta Power 1.
May 4: Northern Spirit 0 Sydney Olympic 3.
May 9: Adelaide City 1 Perth Glory 2.
May 11: Parramatta Power 2 Northern Spirit 2.
May 12: Sydney Olympic 1 Newcastle Utd 2.
May 17: Perth Glory 1 Sydney Olympic 0.
May 18: Parramatta Power 1 Adelaide City 1.
May 23: Newcastle Utd 1 Perth Glory 0.
May 25: Adelaide City 6 Northern Spirit 0; Sydney Olympic 3 Parramatta Power 1.

AUSTRALIA: CH'SHIP PLAY-OFFS – FINAL*

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	
Perth Glory	10	8	0	2	27	7	27	[3]
Sydney Olympic	10	4	1	5	17	14	19	[6]
Adelaide City	10	5	2	3	19	14	17	
Parramatta Power	10	3	4	3	16	21	13	
Northern Spirit	9	2	2	5	7	22	8	
Newcastle Utd	9	2	1	6	9	17	7	

Bonus pts from regular season in brackets
**Pending Northern Spirit v Newcastle Utd result*

Top two qualify for Grand Final

2003 UEFA CUP FINAL

Culture clash!

Europe's north-south divide was exposed when Porto outclassed Celtic. Keir Radnedge reports from Seville

FC PORTO won a clash of cultures to carry off the UEFA Cup and also contributed the most to extend the Final's entertainment value after Liverpool's nine-goal extravaganza against Alaves in 2001 and Feyenoord's overturning of Borussia Dortmund in last year's five-goal special.

For all Celtic's sour grapes, Porto boasted the greater skill and class, the more creative individuals and left no doubt from the outset about their determination to win the game.

Afterwards, coach Jose Mourinho criticised Celtic's unadventurous attitude. He was entitled to say this and give a number of other direct opinions but, from my vantage point high up in the Estadio Olimpico, Celtic appeared just too 'tight' in the first half; and this, ultimately, cost them their opportunity.

Martin O'Neill's men are used to playing Rangers every few weeks so the weight of occasion should have been the least of their worries. But then, the altitude of a European Final had stolen the breath of better teams than Celtic before now.

The culture gap was illustrated perfectly in the managers' post-match analyses. Considering the cosmopolitan integration of footballers at top level, particularly since Bosman, it was surprising yet also perhaps positive that the stylistic contrasts remain so clearly etched.

Celtic, perhaps naively, allowed themselves to be irritated that Porto, like neighbours Boavista in the semi-finals, leaned theatrically on the spirit of the law every time they fell under a Celtic tackle. But Slovak referee Lubos Michel was having none of it. The Portuguese, in return, were angered by Celtic's physicality.

The result suggested that Porto held their nerve better.

Hoops roll into town

Estimates of around 80,000 Celtic fans in Seville may not have been far wide of the mark. These supporters, with their ingenuity, also achieved a majority inside the stadium, which looks, from the outside, more like a Florida shopping mall than a football shop window. At closing time the green-and-white hooped shoppers chanted "cheats" in a tatty response to the victors' polite applause of Celtic.

O'Neill duly opened up by declaring himself "not pleased with the manner of defeat". He added: "Porto are a very talented team but you saw the reaction they got from our fans, who are as fair-minded as any fans in Europe.

"I'm very proud of my team and our supporters. The players have been immense this season in victory and this time they were immense in defeat when I think we deserved more. Clearly the sending-off of Bobo Balde in extra-time had a big effect on

Breaking point...Chris Sutton goes to throttle Marco Ferreira

Basking in it...Celtic fans soak up the pre-match Seville sunshine

'Porto's neat technical game was better tuned to the temperatures of the occasion than Celtic's style, developed in northern climes'

the eventual outcome. Yet only a few seconds earlier Henrik Larsson went down in the penalty area at the other end and the referee waved play on. It was a foul seen by the players and supporters.

"I was particularly disappointed with the way we lost after how we came back at them twice. I thought in extra-time that we were beginning to look the stronger until the sending-off changed the course of the game. I'm not saying, incidentally, that the sending-off wasn't warranted. I had just thought before then that if there were a goal to be scored then it looked as if we were going to get it."

2003 UEFA CUP FINAL

May 21 - Olimpico stadium, Seville
Celtic 2 (Larsson 47, 57)
FC Porto 3 (Derlei 45, 115, Alenichev 54)
Aet. **HT:** 0-1. **90mins:** 2-2. **Att:** 52,972. **Ref:** Michel (Slk)

CELTIC
Douglas - Mjallby, Balde, Valgaeren (Laursen 64) - Agathe, Lambert (McNamara 76), Lennon, Thompson - Petrov (Maloney 105) - Sutton, Larsson.
Subs not used: Hedman, Sylla, Fernandez, Smith.
Booked: Valgaeren, Lennon, Balde, Balde (second), Petrov.
Sent off: Balde 95min.

FC PORTO
Vitor Baia - Paulo Ferreira, Jorge Costa (Pedro Emanuel 71), Ricardo Carvalho, Nuno Valente - Costinha (Ricardo Costa 9), Maniche - Capucho (Marco Ferreira 98), Alenichev, Deco - Derlei.
Subs not used: Nuno, Cesar Peixoto, Clayton, Tiago.
Booked: Nuno Valente, Maniche, Marco Ferreira, Nuno Valente (second).
Sent off: Nuno Valente 120min.

O'Neill, having tacitly agreed with Michel's decision to make Balde the first dismissal of the night (Nuno Valente went, also for two yellows, almost on the final whistle), also criticised the referee for allowing Porto to take so long over Derlei's celebration of the decisive goal that Celtic's comeback momentum had been whittled away. But the referee did, in fact, add on time for this. Besides, if the circumstances had been reversed and Celtic had taken the lead, they might have used the time 'professionally' themselves.

Porto, quite properly, had taken advantage of the circumstances. Their neat technical game was better tuned to the temperatures of the occasion than Celtic's style, developed in northern climes. Balde's dismissal was a direct consequence; he was shown his second yellow for a lunge at Derlei that had fatigue written all over it.

Mourinho acknowledged the pressure of the heat in praising both teams for "making it a great Final and showing the world that football is one big party". Crediting his own players, he pointed out that his gameplan had been upset not only by the absence through suspension of Helder Postiga up front but also by the injuries that removed Costinha and Jorge Costa from the action – Costinha, a selection gamble after injury anyway, departed after only nine minutes.

"Celtic are a very difficult team to play against, especially for a technical team like us," added Mourinho, warming to his theme. "Celtic are much stronger than us physically, and the impact of the aggressive nature of the British game is very hard for us to counter.

"They played in a compact and solid block and gave us the initiative – which was what we wanted. So, for me, the best team won: the team who played the best football.

"As for Celtic's complaints about the referee, he didn't have any decisions that influenced the result: no fouls in the penalty areas or controversial offsides.

"I would say the only mistake was in not showing Balde a straight red card much earlier when he went through Deco's knee. Tackles like that can end a player's career. I think the referee was trying to finish the match with 11 against 11 so he was a bit afraid to show red cards.

"But Celtic play a very hard style with a lot of toughness and aggression – and I could use even harder words if I wanted."

Tactically, there were few surprises. Celtic played 3-4-1-2, with Stilian Petrov in the hole behind strikers Chris Sutton and Larsson; Porto started with their expected 4-2-3-1. However, in an early attempt both to surprise Celtic and to make up for the absence of Helder Postiga, Mourinho encouraged wide-right midfielder Nuno Capucho to go both wide left and up alongside Derlei in attack.

The ultimately sovereign Deco took it in turns to use the space Capucho had vacated on the right of midfield.

Pattern as expected

Similarly, the game quickly settled to stereotypical expectation. Porto used their technical skill to run at the Celtic defence and attempt to interpass their way to goal. Celtic stood firm and restricted the Portuguese to the free-kicks their quick feet inevitably earned. Rab Douglas was the busier keeper but without being seriously tested.

At the other end Celtic, less adventurous, looked to the right wing speed of Didier Agathe to discomfit Nuno Valente and the direct force and pace of the superb Larsson, stage left. In the 21st minute, Larsson's low free-kick after being taken down from behind by Jorge Costa drew an excellent diving save from Vitor Baia.

Celtic's creative problem was that their attacking midfielder Petrov was outnumbered and outmanoeuvred, with Paul Lambert and Neil Lennon too busy protecting their defenders to offer much help.

Thus, in the first minute of first-half overtime Porto went ahead, utilising the inevitable spaces vacated by Celtic's three-man defence. First, Deco attacked from the right and crossed superbly to Dmitri Alenichev, cutting in from the left. The Russian's shot was blocked by Douglas but Derlei followed up to score.

Porto deserved their lead. They had been better set up tactically, more ambitious and less oppressed by the occasion. But Celtic produced the response they needed shortly after half-time when the hopeless Baia stood like a spectator as Larsson rose to head home a hit-and-hope right wing cross from Agathe. It was his 200th goal for the Bhoys.

It was also a goal that sparked a scoring rat-a-tat-tat, and Porto's tactical discipline fell away as the first-half chess match turned into a real football scrap. An exquisite angled pass from Deco provided Alenichev with Porto's second goal, the best of the game. But Celtic, throwing off their earlier inhibitions, struck right back with Larsson again gifted a headed goal, this time from Alan Thompson's right-wing corner.

Larsson rose to the occasion as if all too aware that his career was running out of time. At 31 he had already retired from the Swedish national team after their second-round exit at the World Cup last year (though he was recently persuaded to don the shirt once again) and his loyalty to Celtic has been snagged by criticism that his achievements owe not a little to the poor standards of defending in the Scottish Premier League. A minor consolation for him in defeat is that his personal contribution in terms of goals and overall play should have silenced such carping for good.

'Celtic play with a lot of toughness and aggression – and I could use even harder words if I wanted'

Jose Mourinho

Party time...Porto lift the UEFA Cup

'Silver goal' introduced

UEFA had used the occasion to launch the 'silver goal' system, whereby play would continue until the next formal break if a goal were scored in either the first or second half of extra-time. Initial reaction was cautiously positive. Balde's expulsion was the decisive twist in the first 15-minute period, just as Derlei's winning strike, after Celtic had failed to support a Douglas clearance, defined not merely the second period but also the match.

The goal climaxed a remarkable season for the Brazilian, who thus closed his first-ever European campaign with 11 goals (the same tally as Larsson) to reward the acumen of Mourinho in bringing him from Uniao Leiria "for peanuts", as the coach put it himself.

Derlei received a £7,500 cheque to donate to charity as official man of the match, but personally I would have gone for Deco, the Brazilian turned Portuguese. He had begun quietly but duly asserted his skills in the play surrounding the first two Porto goals and then worked as hard as anyone in extra-time, demonstrating his controversial abilities to the widest possible audience.

Deco has been playing in Portuguese football for more than five years with Alverca, Salgueiros and now Porto. He has won the UEFA Cup, the League twice and the Cup twice and next season he will lead Porto into the Champions League and Portugal into the European Championship finals.

The experience of Seville should sharpen his appetite dangerously. Porto, first Portuguese winners of the UEFA Cup (Benfica were runners-up in 1983), thus joined the elite company of only Ajax and Juventus in having won the Big Five club tournaments open to European sides – the others being the World Club Cup, Champions Cup, now-defunct Cup-winners Cup and European Supercup.

Mourinho was "euphoric" enough with victory in its own right. This was not, he warned, a springboard to Champions League glory. He said: "We can do nice things in the Champions League next season but I don't think we can win it. Winning the Champions League is just for the sharks, clubs who can afford to spend 20 or 30 or 40million euros on one player."

At least Porto proved there are other fish in the sea.

Silver bullet...Derlei fires Porto's winning goal past Rab Douglas

The inquest begins

Sid Lowe in Madrid reports on the reaction to Real's Champions League semi-final defeat

Taking a fall...Real crashed out to Juve after a game billed as 'good versus evil' in the Spanish press

IT WAS billed as good versus evil, beauty versus the beast, light versus dark. Real Madrid, appropriately kitted out in virginal white, versus the black-shirted Juventus.

The TVE trailer spoke volumes. Using the music and opening, story-telling credits from *Star Wars*, the station advertised its coverage of an apocalyptic clash between Madrid's "Galactic" superstars and the "miserable football" of the evil empire from across the Mediterranean Sea.

Then it waved off Madrid's Jedi Knights with an Obi-Wan style: "May the goals be with you."

Fuelled, in part, by Mauro Tassotti's nose-breaking attack on Luis Enrique in the 1994 World Cup, the Spanish think Italian football is talentless, dirty, cynical and – above all – boring. *Catenaccio* is derided, its demise delights.

Which is why the Spanish have been even more vociferous crusaders this year: seeing three Italian teams in the semi-finals hurts. And disgusts.

It also surprises: the Spanish media – with commentator and ex-Madrid winger Michel leading the line – refuses to believe that the Italians have any technical ability, or that winning by any means other than 'talent' is licit.

Yet the attacks have been harsh. While Inter were exceptionally defensive and lucky against Valencia in the Champions League quarter-finals – Valencia coach Rafa Benitez moaned that "if all teams played like that, the stadiums would be empty" – the same has not been true of Milan or Juventus.

Besides, if it works, why not? Speaking at a press conference before the semi-final, Ivan Helguera admitted: "I'd rather three Spanish teams and one Italian were in the semi-finals, even if it meant us playing 'bad' football. Italy have won three World Cups, while Spain...well, you know."

It was a measure of the media agenda that Helguera's remarks were not reproduced the following day.

But his point was proved in Turin. Madrid would have given anything to defend like the Italians. Besides, Juventus were far from the caricature villains, and so comprehensive was their 3-1 victory, giving them a 4-3 aggregate win, that even the most rabid anti-Italian had to accept it. *Marca* published an editorial entitled 'Italy Taught Us A Lesson', which said: "There's no excuse, there was no *catenaccio*, no time-wasting, no dirty tricks, nothing. Everything was clean...Italian football has won on hunger, ability and organisation. Maybe the sceptics are right in general terms, but we need to be clearer because Inter, the most horrible of teams, are out while Juventus and Milan are not."

The scapegoating begins

Not that resigned acceptance truly characterised the reaction. It was just that the ire was directed elsewhere, mostly towards Real's veteran defender Fernando Hierro and coach Vicente Del Bosque.

Sport's front cover showed Hierro, blamed for all three Juve goals, on the cross with the headline "Crucified". *AS* described his performance as "horrible", adding: "Some footballers are incapable of admitting they are finished. Rarely has a defeat so utterly laid bare a footballer's failings, nor a debacle been so clearly personalised. By the end, Hierro didn't make you angry, he made you feel sorry for him." Elsewhere, the paper called for Hierro to "Go now!"

Marca preferred to generalise, claiming that a "black hole swallowed all of Madrid's superstars", not just Hierro. Like *AS*, though, it attacked Del Bosque's decision to cover the absence of Claude Makelele by playing the largely forgotten Esteban Cambiasso in central midfield alongside Flavio Conceicao, rather than opting for three centre-backs or moving Helguera forward. The coach was also virulently criticised for his passivity – with Madrid chasing the game, Javier Portillo and Fernando Morientes remained on the bench.

So clear were Madrid's failings that many also believe it's become impossible for president Florentino Perez to continue buying only superstars – the need for a centre-back and a defensive midfielder was so painfully apparent that even Perez may think twice about bidding for David Beckham.

Instead, names like Cristian Chivu, Patrick Vieira, Walter Samuel and Ruben Baraja have emerged – although one newspaper claimed that Perez privately insisted he would "never" buy a central defender.

Whatever, the president was reportedly furious about Turin – and that is bad news for both Hierro and Del Bosque, whose contracts run out this summer.

Having already stalled, Madrid seem more reluctant than ever to keep hold of the scapegoats for Turin and for the looming prospect of winning nothing (at the time of writing, Real Sociedad top La Liga by a point with three games left).

Deals with Del Bosque and Hierro were supposed to be tied up weeks ago, but neither has yet signed an extension. Hierro claimed: "I was told the spring, and the spring is a long time", but the club's contradictory statements, especially from sporting director Jorge Valdano (unpopular among the players), have hardly helped soothe a process in which Madrid seem to be trying to renew them on the cheap. Or not at all.

Del Bosque has been offered an extension, but only on the same wages set three years ago, before winning a League title and two European Cups. Unusually, he has voiced his discontent. "If this is a five-star club, the manager should earn a five-star wage," he told Radio Marca.

Valdano replied that if an agreement wasn't reached, "we'll go our separate ways", and there are suggestions of deeper problems. Perez insisted the thing holding up the deal was the "economic issue" – something Del Bosque denied.

More than a hint of unrest

All of which hints at staff distaste over the way the club is run, and the possibility that Del Bosque has grown tired of fruitlessly requesting a centre-back from his president, only to be attacked for Madrid's defensive frailties.

It also suggests that Perez is not as keen on Del Bosque continuing as he claims. That much was confirmed by reports that Madrid have spoken to Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger and, in an ironic words-eating twist, Juve's Marcello Lippi. If you can't beat them, buy them.

Catalan press reports suggest that Madrid may also need to buy a new goalkeeper after news broke that Barcelona presidential candidate Jaume Llaurado had agreed a Luis Figo-style deal with a "Real Madrid first-team player", and that the player would join Barcelona should Llaurado win the elections.

Sport subsequently announced that the player was Iker Casillas. The goalkeeper denied it, but, as Llaurado, who has named no one, put it: "And Figo denied going to Madrid."

Elsewhere, presidential elections have been announced for June 14 at Valencia, and fans are cashing in as current president Jaime Orti and rival Paco Roig buy up shares at inflated prices to strengthen their hands.

By contrast, Atletico Madrid president Jesus Gil y Gil is looking to offload his shares (that haven't been embargoed by the High Court). After the club's centenary debacle (when Atletico capitulated against Osasuna), a series of high-profile rants at players, and coach Luis Aragones leaving a year early, Gil has decided to call it a day, saying he's "had enough".

"It's a relief to be leaving," he said. Others will feel the same way.

Pro-file Donato

Depor's 40-something centre-back making La Liga history

WHEN Deportivo La Coruna centre-back Donato leapt to score a header against Malaga recently, he broke his own record as the oldest goalscorer in La Liga history. The following week, as if to prove it was no fluke, he out-jumped another defence, this time Valencia's, to score the 50th goal of his Spanish career and nudge the bar even higher – to 40 years, four months and 11 days.

That, at least, is Donato's official age. Vicious tongues have insisted that he is substantially older than the yearbooks would have it. But, questioned before a springtime Champions League game against Manchester United, Donato rejected the accusations with a colossal smile and a huge, booming laugh – not to mention a quick date-of-birth recital to dispel any doubts.

"The age thing is just a joke," he insisted, "they think I look older – maybe because of my corpulence. If only I was well into my forties and playing like this. But I was born on December 30, 1962."

Hardly a youngster, yet while Donato is the oldest goalscorer in La Liga history and boasts the ample belly of a pub player, his talent remains and he is full of life and brimming with confidence.

Nonetheless, at 40, it is hardly surprising that many believe the end is nigh. It's only natural that Depor coach Javier Irureta fears for Donato against the game's speed merchants, and that club president Augusto Lendoiro has so far refused to grant an extension to his contract which expires this summer.

Donato is pained by the realisation that to fight off retirement he will almost certainly have to change teams. He believes he still has two years left at First Division level, and at the club he considers home. After all, this isn't the first time he has been written off, and he always comes back for more.

Donato joined Deportivo from Atletico Madrid in 1993 – and even then, it was said in some quarters, a four-year deal was ridiculous for a 30-year-old. Such complaints seem absurd now. Until this year Donato had been a virtual ever-present. He has also turned out for his adopted Spain 12 times and once even rescued Depor by playing in goal against Oviedo. He kept a clean sheet.

Most thought recent injury would bring down the curtain on Donato's career. They were only half right. The defender finally slipped from the first-choice XI, and this time his contract will not be renewed; yet he has still racked up 33 League, Cup and European appearances this season and never lets Depor down. What he lacks in speed and aggression, he makes up for in vision, touch and intelligence. As Irureta once cooed: "He's got wonderful technique and he's so bright – it doesn't matter that he's not that quick. It's just a shame I didn't get to work with him at 27 or 28. What a player he would have been then."

Donato also has an exemplary attitude – he rolls into training a good 20 minutes before his team-mates, oozes enthusiasm, works exceptionally hard and, as an Athlete of Christ, has absolute faith in everything he does. Which is why it is so hard for him to accept that a wonderful career, which really took off after his 30th birthday, is finally coming to an end; that this year, unlike the previous five, he hasn't beaten the doubters to a new deal.

It hurts Donato because he loves his football. Perhaps, like his father, a little too much. It runs in the family: Donato recently claimed that every time he phones his parents in Brazil, his mother "always tells me that Dad's out playing football. He's always hanging around looking for a game".

Donato's Dad is 67.

In 27 years' time, maybe a pension-drawing Donato will be searching for a kickabout himself. And he won't be short of takers.

Sid Lowe

Fact file

Club Deportivo La Coruna
Country Spain
Born December 30, 1962, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
Previous clubs Vasco da Gama (Bra), Atletico Madrid
International debut November 1994, v Denmark
International caps 12 (3 goals)
Honours Spanish League 2000 (Deportivo)

Champions Juve give full value

Paddy Agnew in Rome reports on the climax of the Serie A season

The old routine...Marcello Lippi's special bond with his players helped to secure a 27th Serie A crown for Juventus

REVENGE, Italians like to say, is a dish best eaten cold. If that is the case, then half the nation has been happily tucking into cold breakfasts, lunches and dinners for the past month in the aftermath of a momentous season which saw the country's two most famous sides, Juventus and Milan, contest the Champions League Final.

To a great extent, the Champions League Final overshadowed the final acts of the Serie A season, with Juventus wrapping up their 27th title with two games to spare. The Juve fans themselves made the point when they only half-filled the Stadio Delle Alpi on the day that a 2-2 draw with Perugia secured them the championship. The fans were keeping their powder dry for the Champions League semi-final, second leg home tie with Real Madrid four days later.

And it is not exactly a novel experience to see the 'Old Lady' pick up the Serie A title. By contrast, an all-Italian Champions League Final was something that even the most chauvinistic of Italian fans would have hardly dared to predict last summer. The sense of pride at the Champions League achievement went hand in hand with a mischievous spirit of reprisal, aimed principally at the Spanish for the good reason that the Spanish sports media had heaped derision on Italian football for most of the spring. Spanish frustration probably had something to do with the fact that Italian clubs eliminated all of Spain's finest, starting with Deportivo La Coruna, moving on to Valencia and rounding off with the consecutive knockouts administered by Juventus to the 'Big Two', Barcelona and Real Madrid.

Italian clubs, we were informed, like to play defensive football just like "pigs like to roll in manure". According to one Spanish paper, the all-decisive semi-final second leg between Juventus and Real Madrid was played not in Turin but "in the land of football troglodytes".

Previewing the other semi-final, the all-Italian meeting of Milan and Internazionale, Spanish daily *Marca* had advised readers to turn off the television and go to the cinema instead. Milan's celebrated San Siro stadium was re-baptised the "San Zero", in reference to the poor quality, overly defensive fare offered by the two Milan sides.

Spanish scores settled

Against the background of such fierce criticism, Juve's 3-1 second leg defeat of Real Madrid was seen not just as one in the eye for the Spaniards but also as a definitive vindication for an Italian football movement that has suffered its share of disappointments in recent times. These have included both a humiliating elimination from last year's World Cup finals, and three consecutive seasons when Serie A clubs failed to progress beyond the Champions League quarter-finals.

"Those who idolise Spanish football are free to go to the cinema on the night of May 28. It does not really matter, since half the rest of the world will be tuning in to Old Trafford to watch the game. But, tell me, was Italian football not outdated, in total ruins and on the way out?" chortled Milan daily *Corriere Della Sera*.

"The Spaniards have been jeering us for months...as if some latter-day Moses had handed down to them the Tablets re football. Now we see them struggle off the pitch on their knees, still reeling from the tough lesson handed out to them," echoed *Gazzetta Dello Sport*.

Even Juve's normally elegant coach Marcello Lippi got in on the act of vindication, saying: "We've proved that Italian football did not deserve all the negative judgments aimed at it, but that it deserves respect. I don't know if Italian football is the best, but that matters little. What matters are the results, which say it was an all-Italian Final."

Even before they got to Old Trafford, both Juventus and Milan had plenty to be pleased about. While Juventus had won the title, Milan had earned a place in next season's Champions League by finishing third in Serie A. They had also just about guaranteed themselves their first Italian Cup for 25 years when winning the first leg of the Final 4-1 away to Roma.

It is worth recalling, too, that Juventus were far from everybody's favourites at the outset. This was not because of any inherent weaknesses, but rather a widespread suspicion (subsequently confirmed by Lippi) that the Old Lady would be giving her best shot to the Champions League rather than to the Serie A title contest. Furthermore, Juventus had conducted a quiet transfer market campaign, with Parma striker Marco Di Vaio and Verona's Argentinian midfielder Mauro Camoranesi being their only significant purchases.

In a season tinged with sadness, following the death in January of former Fiat president and No 1 Juventus fan Gianni Agnelli, the probable turning point came with a home game against Inter in March. That match followed a traumatic week when Juventus lost home and away to Manchester United in consecutive Champions League games.

The two sides went into the game joint top on 48 points but Juventus blasted Inter apart to win 3-0 to go clear. After that the Turin side were never again headed in the championship race.

Last season, Juventus won the title thanks more to Inter blowing it when beaten 4-2 by Lazio on the last day; this time, the Old Lady was full value for her win. Juventus, though, owe a lot to two men in particular – Lippi and Czech midfielder Pavel Nedved. Speaking on the day after the title win, the coach explained: "Sometimes I think that my only real merit is that I am a royal pain in the ass every day in training. Sometimes I go over the top, but I still think that the bond between Lippi and his players is something that you simply won't find in other teams. No coach and squad know one another inside out like we do."

To some extent that point is borne out by the fact that a tough nucleus of players – Ciro Ferrara, Uruguayan Paolo Montero, Dutchman Edgar Davids, Alessandro Del Piero, Antonio Conte, Gianluca Pessotto and Alessio Tacchinardi – have stuck with him and Juventus during both his periods as club coach, from 1994 to 1999 and from the summer of 2001 onwards.

As for Nedved, *World Soccer* has already had reason to highlight his contribution to the Juventus season. Nothing more clearly underlines his current status than the widespread disappointment (not just in Italy) prompted by his suspension-enforced absence from that Old Trafford Final.

Inter come up short again

As for the others, the season ended with familiar disappointment for Inter, surprise success for Lazio and a comeback for Parma.

Inter, widely seen as favourites at the start, ended up with another second place, seven points behind Juventus. Even more painful was their Champions League semi-final elimination by cross-town rivals Milan. At press time, it is not clear whether Inter's Argentinian coach Hector Cuper will survive these disappointments or be sent packing in favour of Lazio coach Roberto Mancini.

Cuper stands accused of playing an overly defensive game (some say he is the most 'Italian' of all Serie A coaches), and of having failed to impose a genuine gameplan or style upon a squad that contains some outstanding talent – forwards Christian Vieri (Serie A's top scorer with 24 goals), Hernan Crespo, Alvaro Recoba and Obafemi Martins, midfielders Gigi Di Biagio, Emre Belozoglu and Okan Buruk, and defender Javier Zanetti.

If Mancini does take over from Cuper, he will do so thanks to Lazio's Champions League qualification following their fourth-place Serie A finish. After a summer during which the club sold off two of their brightest talents in defender Alessandro Nesta (to Milan) and Hernan Crespo (to Inter), not to mention an autumn of financial crisis, not many would have predicted Lazio's form.

Mancini not only got results, but also saw his side play some excellent football. The 2-1 defeat of Juventus at the Stadio Delle Alpi made Lazio the only side to beat the champions at home.

There was also a resurgence for Parma, who, along with Roma and Udinese, will play in next season's UEFA Cup. Rebuilding under new coach Cesare Prandelli, Parma hired two of the brightest top guns in Serie A – Brazilian Adriano and Romanian Adrian Mutu, who between them scored 33 goals. Parma must be serious contenders for Champions League qualification next term.

Udinese's surprise UEFA Cup qualification owes much to the glittering midfield talent of Chilean Davide Pizarro, a player likely to be on the move this summer, and to the battling qualities of seasoned campaigners such as Dane Martin Jorgensen and striker Roberto Muzzi.

Roma proved the most disappointing of the Serie A elite, finishing eighth but admitted to the UEFA Cup in the role of Italian Cup finalists, Milan having already booked their place in the Champions League. Here, too, big changes could be in the offing with not only the future of coach Fabio Capello in doubt but also key players of recent seasons such as Brazilians Cafu, Aldair and Lima likely to be moving on.

The other Serie A verdicts were predictable, with Piacenza, Torino and Como all going down to Serie B, and Atalanta and Reggina ending up in a play-off to stay in Serie A.

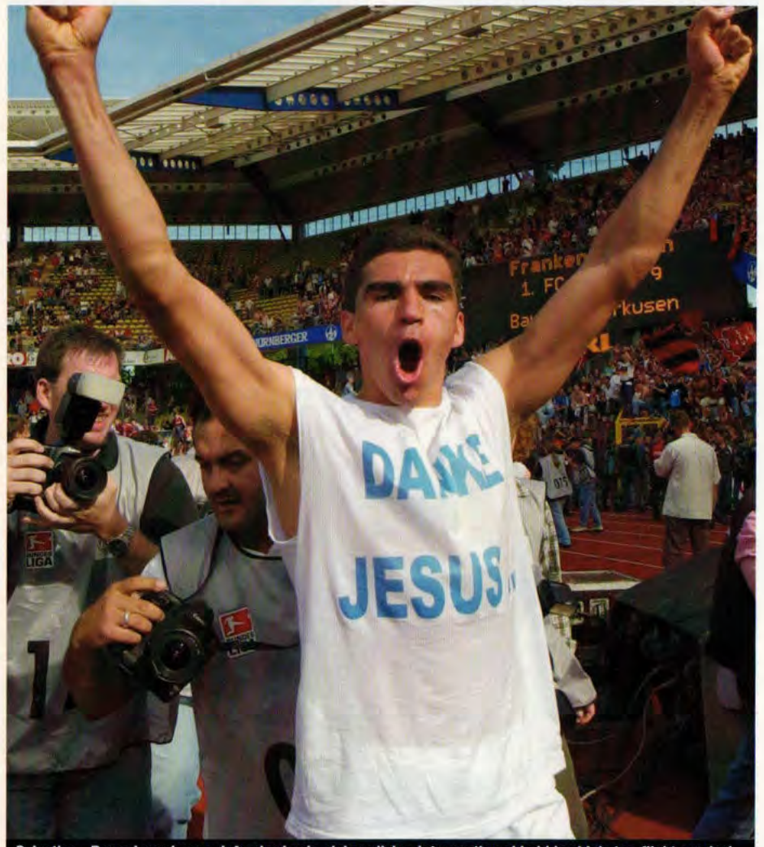
One final thought concerns two Little Big Men, at opposite ends of their careers, whose glorious talents provided some of the best moments of the year – namely 36-year-old Roberto Baggio and 23-year-old Fabrizio Miccoli. Baggio's skills and 12 goals did much to put Brescia into the InterToto Cup, while Miccoli's winner in Perugia's 1-0 February defeat of Milan was just about the best individual strike of the season.

Let's hope for more of the same from them next term.

On the up...Lazio coach Roberto Mancini

Bayer rise from the dead

Nick Bidwell sees last season's League runners-up make a miraculous escape from relegation



Salvation...Bayer Leverkusen defender Lucio claims divine intervention aided his side's top-flight survival

JUST three weeks after being pronounced "a dead team" by Hamburg skipper Nico-Jan Hoogma, Bayer Leverkusen proved they were not quite ready for the Bundesliga mortuary, pulling clear of the relegation mire thanks to a late, late return to winning ways.

To be fair to the now-embarrassed Hoogma, the Leverkusen escape act was one that few experts thought possible. For most of the season, the Rhinelanders had looked a shadow of the team that, in 2001-02, had been heroic Champions League and Bundesliga runners-up. Short on confidence, desire and organisation, Bayer were in a sorry state. Indeed, as the campaign drew to its close, most of the players were seemingly more interested in finding themselves another club than scrapping to avoid the drop.

Panic appeared to be setting in among the Leverkusen management too. They insured themselves against relegation, and with caretaker boss Thomas Horster clearly floundering, the club's newly-installed sports director Jurgen Kohler suggested bringing in ex-Bayern Munich and Monchengladbach coach Udo Lattek as an 11th-hour troubleshooter. Negotiations with the old-timer began but were soon ended by his demands for £1.3million for six weeks' work. Horster, however, would not see out the season. Following a 4-1 defeat at Hamburg, he admitted he had given up hope of saving Leverkusen and was sacked, replaced for the final two weeks of the campaign by former Nurnberg boss Klaus Augenthaler.

Understandably, Augenthaler was not initially regarded as a would-be saviour by Leverkusen fans. Recently fired by Nurnberg for failing to steer them clear of the drop zone, he had hardly covered himself in glory as a leader this season. Many media voices claimed he had got the call only because he was available and used to play alongside Kohler in the Germany defence. Some predicted Augenthaler would become only the third coach in Bundesliga history to take two clubs down in one season.

Instead, the new man galvanised the hitherto soft-centred *Leverkusener* in his usual straight-talking way, and a 3-0 home win over 1860 Munich followed by a 1-0 victory at his old club Nurnberg were enough to secure survival.

While Leverkusen and Borussia Monchengladbach saved their skins in the nick of time, Energie Cottbus, Nurnberg and Arminia Bielefeld slipped through the Bundesliga trapdoor. As all three are in deep economic waters and likely to experience a mass exodus of players, the chances of a quick return to the elite are slim.

They will be replaced in the top division by Freiburg, Koln and Eintracht Frankfurt.

As for the championship race, it never really got started. Bayern Munich clinched their 18th national championship a month before the end of the season, and the fact they finished 16 points clear of second-placed Stuttgart says everything about the lack of competition.

Bayern were in cruise control throughout. It mattered little that three of their best midfielders, Hasan Salihamidzic, Mehmet Scholl and Sebastian Deisler, were missing through injury for most of the season, that Brazilian striker Giovane Elber only scored at home or that Michael Ballack did not have quite as much scope to go forward as at previous club Leverkusen. Bayern were still too strong.

In truth, 2002-03 was the tale of two Bayerns: the attack-conscious side whose free-form football was dubbed the 'White Ballet' early in the season; and the more defensively-disciplined set-up that coach Ottmar Hitzfeld turned to following their shock first round Champions League exit. "My analysis was that we had been too open in our approach," said Hitzfeld. Henceforth, Bayern's priority was to keep the back door locked, and a watertight defence – only 25 goals conceded in 34 games – proved the bedrock of the championship success.

Stuttgart pipped Borussia Dortmund in the race for the second direct qualification spot in the Champions League on the final day. Borussia, who must now take part in the preliminary round, only had themselves to blame, performing shoddily in a 1-1 draw at home to bottom club Energie Cottbus, while Stuttgart beat Wolfsburg 2-0.

Expect a summer shake-up at Dortmund, last season's champions. Unhappy with his team's poor away form and lapses in concentration, coach Matthias Sammer caused a stir by calling into question the professionalism of his team, claiming many of them were spending too much time watching TV and eating chips. Whatever next.

Stuttgart boss Felix Magath, meanwhile, must be a contender for Coach of the Season. He has built a fine side on a shoestring and has brought the best out of youngsters such as full-back Andreas Hinkel, schemer Alexander Hleb and striker Kevin Kuranyi. However, Magath is already warning his board that they will quickly fall back into the pack unless cash is spent on new players in the close season. "Our playmaker, Krassimir Balakov, is retiring, and Bradley Carnell, Jochen Seitz, Sean Dundee and Viorel Ganea are leaving too," said Magath. "Without adequate replacements, the only goal we'll have next year is Bundesliga survival."

In possession...Juninho and co won the title despite a last-day defeat by Guingamp

Lyon go back to back

LYON became the first team to win back-to-back French championships since the early 1990s when putting themselves effectively beyond reach of second-placed Marseille with a 1-1 draw at Montpellier on May 20.

The point meant Marseille needed to beat Nantes by some 20 goals on the final matchday while hoping Lyon lost at home to Guingamp. The latter, in fact, came to pass, as Paul Le Guen's side took their foot off the pedal and lost 4-1 at Stade Gerland. However, Marseille failed to score at all against Nantes, losing 1-0, a result that even allowed Monaco to grab France's second automatic Champions League qualifying slot.

"The pressure was higher because we were title holders," said Le Guen. "But victory is nicer. To win the championship is the reward of a full year of relentless efforts. You need to be consistent. We were not at the beginning of the season but we finished strongly."

The coach's words reflect Lyon's far from straightforward path to the title. Indeed, he had been on the verge of quitting in the autumn with Lyon only in mid-table and after their exit from the Champions League at the end of the first group phase.

However, the team finished strongly, seeing off the challenges of Monaco then Marseille, the last team to win successive titles. The draw at Montpellier extended Lyon's unbeaten run to 11 games, eight of them victories.

Monaco's late grab of the second Champions League place and their 4-1 League Cup Final victory over Sochaux on May 17 made up to some degree for their failure to take the championship itself.

There seems a great irony in the dichotomy between their largely excellent performances on the field and their parlous situation off it. Indeed, the club appear headed for economic chaos. Club president Jean-Louis Campora thought he had found new backers recently only to be turned down by the authorities on the grounds that they had a suspect record. Campora has admitted Monaco have a deficit of £39million, but others have estimated it at £60m.

Marseille now have to content themselves with a place in the Champions League qualifying round, while Bordeaux and Sochaux take their places in the UEFA Cup.

Sochaux's progress in Europe can only be aided by the presence in goal of 19-year-old Teddy Richert, a new claimant to France's No 1 shirt. The teenager has been improving all season, and with the fading of Fabien Barthez could well be a future candidate to the French succession.

The four sides promoted last year met on the final day of this term in less celebratory circumstances, with Le Havre failing to extend their top-flight stay despite beating Nice 2-1 at home. Ajaccio survived, finishing a point clear of Le Havre, after a 0-0 draw at home to Strasbourg. Sedan and Troyes also went down, with Toulouse, Le Mans and Metz making the journey up.

Andre Duclos

Pro-file Jose Dominguez

Wing wizard enjoying magical renaissance at Kaiserslautern

JOSE DOMINGUEZ lives. The Portuguese winger, who not long ago seemed in irreversible decline, has resurfaced spectacularly in the Bundesliga with Kaiserslautern, taking a headlining role as the *Lauterer* put together a spring winning run to escape relegation.

Once rated one of Portugal's most exciting attacking talents and capped three times in 1995, Dominguez seemed set fair for a brilliant career, only to gradually fade from view. After leaving Sporting Lisbon for Tottenham in summer 1997 in a £1.6million deal, he spent three fruitless years on the bench or in the reserves. He would cut the same peripheral figure following his November 2000 transfer to Kaiserslautern.

No one doubted his flair on the left flank, yet the perception of his coaches was that he was too erratic, too inclined to showboat and nothing short of a liability in terms of defensive capability. However, Dominguez got another chance to prove his worth following Kaiserslautern's disastrous start to this season. After coach Andy Brehme was fired in September, his successor, Eric Gerets, was to look much more favourably on the winger's claims for a first-team berth. Keen to improve the service from wide to strikers Miroslav Klose and Vratislav Lokvenc, Gerets saw the pace and trickery of the little Portuguese as an ideal supply line.

The new boss was not to be disappointed. Few are the Bundesliga defenders who have enjoyed a comfortable afternoon this season when faced with Dominguez's wing wizardry, and besides supplying crosses a-plenty, he has netted some goals of his own, too, celebrating each one with a series of somersaults.

"I can only thank Eric Gerets for changing my luck as a footballer," says the 29-year-old. "Apart from the injury problems I had at Kaiserslautern, I just didn't seem to fit the playing system of Andy Brehme. I couldn't understand why they had signed me in the first place.

"My goal is to get back into the Portugal team. They do not have a lot of naturally left-footed wide players, and if I can keep my good form going, maybe new coach Luiz Felipe Scolari will give me a chance."

For Gerets, it was simply a case of exploiting Dominguez's qualities. "He's not a defender, not a wing-back," says the coach. "He does his best work in the attacking third. With four rather than three at the back it's much better for him. Jose is the player who has improved the most since I came here. Months ago, he was almost finished. Now he's performing very well indeed for us."

Spurs fans would not recognise the new, improved Dominguez.

Nick Bidwell

Fact file

Club Kaiserslautern (Ger)
Country Portugal
Born February 16, 1974, in Lisbon
Previous clubs Benfica, Sport Uniao Sintrense, Fafe, Birmingham (Eng), Sporting Lisbon, Tottenham (Eng)
International debut October 1995, v Austria
International caps 3 (0 goals)
Honours English League Cup 1999 (Tottenham)

Honours even?

Man United win the League, Arsenal the Cup, but the war of words about who's best rumbles on. Gavin Hamilton reports

Champions again...Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson (left) and his team celebrate their eighth League title in 11 years

THE WAR of words between Sir Alex Ferguson and Arsene Wenger continued until the final day of the season. Manchester United raised the Premiership trophy at Everton, Arsenal having conceded the title by losing at home to Leeds the previous weekend.

United manager Ferguson, having seen his team win 15 of their last 18 League games to overhaul Arsenal at the top, declared: "Never mind all the talk from south of Birmingham, we have proved ourselves champions."

Wenger, whose Arsenal side beat Southampton 1-0 to retain the FA Cup – the first team to do so since Tottenham in 1982 – retaliated by insisting that Arsenal were the best overall team in England this season.

Wenger said: "I still think that our overall achievement, in reaching the FA Cup Final too, was as high, if not higher, than United's."

United were able to pull off the remarkable run of victories largely thanks to the goals – 13 in United's last eight games – of striker Ruud Van Nistelrooy, though he lost out to Arsenal's Thierry Henry in the player of the year awards from both the players themselves and the Football Writers' Association.

"Ruud Van Nistelrooy's form has without question been the deciding factor," Ferguson said. "When a centre-forward scores the number of goals in important games that he has, it has to be the difference. I knew he was going to become a great player. But I didn't know quite how good. He has surprised me almost every week."

Arsenal, by contrast, ran out of steam after their failure to reach the Champions League quarter-finals. A 2-2 draw at Bolton, after conceding two late goals, proved to be the turning point.

But Wenger, whose side have reached the Champions League quarter-finals only once in five attempts, insisted: "We are not far away from winning the European Cup. I'm deeply disappointed, but our number one priority is to come back stronger, and that means we want to defend better. We may sign a defender or two, there's no revolution needed." Arsenal overcame a well-organised but limited Southampton side in Cardiff thanks to Robert Pires' first-half goal. Saints fans, attending their first Final for 27 years, added to the colour and spectacle of an occasion that has been dominated by bigger clubs in recent seasons.

Newcastle finished third in the League and Chelsea took the fourth Champions League spot, ahead of Liverpool, after beating the Anfield side 2-1 at Stamford Bridge on the final day of the season.

West Ham, despite rallying in their final three games under caretaker manager Trevor Brooking, were relegated after 10 seasons in the top division. Bolton's 2-1 win over Middlesbrough on the final day condemned the Hammers and sparked inevitable speculation about the sale of their prize playing assets.

Young stars like Joe Cole, Michael Carrick and Jermain Defoe are bound to attract interest, but West Ham's priority will be to try and dispose of older, and higher, wage-earners. That process started with Lee Bowyer joining Newcastle.

Bowyer will be reunited with Jonathan Woodgate, his former Leeds team-mate with whom he was tried and acquitted in 2001 of grevious bodily harm after an Asian student was attacked in Leeds city centre. Woodgate was found guilty of affray, a lesser charge.

Newcastle manager Sir Bobby Robson admitted that he had wrestled with his conscience before signing Bowyer. "Lee needs a second chance. We knew there was a slight problem in that sense with Lee Bowyer, but the past is the past," said Robson.

An estimated weekly wage of £30,000 – £6million over four seasons – will also help Bowyer put the past behind him.

England's post-season trip to South Africa – largely a public relations exercise to curry favour with the South African FA ahead of its 2010 World Cup bid – was marred by arguments over Wayne Rooney and David Beckham.

Everton manager David Moyes demonstrated why many consider him in the Ferguson mould when he clashed with the FA over the fitness of Rooney, insisting the 17-year-old should not make the trip because of a knee injury.

Beckham, whose meeting with Nelson Mandela overshadowed a low-key match in Durban which England won 2-1, was then embroiled in a dispute over whether the English FA had received £1m from its South African counterpart to guarantee Beckham's appearance. Both organisations denied this.

● Wolverhampton Wanderers will play in the Premier League next season after beating Sheffield United 3-0 in Cardiff in the First Division play-off Final. Wolves, whose benefactor Sir Jack Hayward has pumped £60m into the club, last played in the top flight 19 years ago.

SCOTLAND

Rangers nick title after rush for goals

RANGERS won the championship for the first time since 2000 by a single goal from Celtic in one of the most thrilling conclusions to the title race for many years.

With the teams level on points and goal difference going into the final weekend, the side who could beat their opponents by the greatest margin would take the prize. And while Celtic trounced Kilmarnock 4-0 away, Rangers outdid them, hammering Dunfermline 6-1 at Ibrox to finish with a goal difference of 73, one greater than their city rivals.

Right until the final minutes of the two games, the destination of the title was still not clear – but in the end, Mikel Arteta hit home a penalty for Rangers to make sure the trophy would return to Ibrox.

The competitive nature of the battle provided a pleasing contrast to the one-horse race of last season, when Celtic had the League won with weeks to spare. This term, the 'favourites' tag shifted between the Old Firm sides in the closing weeks, as the balance of power shifted constantly between the two.

The sustained competitive edge was due in no small part to the admirable tenacity of the two managers. Rangers boss Alex McLeish has instilled a passion in his squad that was clearly lacking under predecessor Dick Advocaat. Meanwhile, Celtic's Martin O'Neill showed his coaching prowess by maintaining the team's championship challenge while also restoring European integrity to Scottish football by steering Celtic to the UEFA Cup Final. In the end O'Neill finished without a trophy, the agonising capitulation to Rangers coming just four days after the extra-time defeat by FC Porto.

Former England captain Terry Butcher had a season to forget, his financially-stricken Motherwell team having finished bottom of the Premier Division. However, they avoided relegation after First Division champions Falkirk were denied promotion. The top division chairmen voted against their rise because the club's Brockville stadium does not meet Premier League criteria.

Alan Fairley

Silver smile...Alex McLeish lifts the championship trophy

WALES

Triple Double for Barry

IN YET another close League finish, Barry Town claimed the championship by three points from Total Network Solutions, who had led the table for most of the season.

Barry's title win was their third in succession, and their penalty shoot-out win over Cwmbran Town in the Cup Final following a 2-2 draw brought them an unprecedented third successive Double.

Barry's qualification for the Champions League means that Cwmbran go into the UEFA Cup despite losing the Final. They are joined by TNS, while Bangor City, who finished third in the League, enter the InterToto Cup.

The second relegated side was not decided until the final day, Welshpool succumbing on goal difference despite winning 2-0 at Newtown to join Llanelli in the drop. Oswestry snatched a point at Caernarfon to stay up by having a superior goal difference of just one.

The northern promotion slot went to CPD Porthmadog, but southern applicants Neath AFC may be denied promotion because of ground criteria issues.

Mel Thomas

N IRELAND

Coleraine take Cup

A SURPRISINGLY out-of-sorts Glentoran failed to achieve the League and Cup double when they lost out to underdogs Coleraine in the Irish Cup Final at Windsor Park.

The champions were never allowed to settle by Marty Quinn's side, and a goal by striker Jody Tolan after 11 minutes decided the untidy match. The 1-0 win handed Coleraine their first major trophy for 16 years.

Glentoran winger Tim McCann did rattle the crossbar twice in the second half, but as the 31-year-old admitted after the game, it was never to be Glentoran's day. His side now represent Northern Ireland in the Champions League, while Coleraine and League runners-up Portadown will play in the UEFA Cup.

A quartet of clubs – Dungannon Swifts, Ballymena United, Limavady United and Larne – have won promotion to the Premiership, now expanded to 16 clubs from 12. No side was relegated after bottom-placed Newry Town beat second level Bangor in a play-off.

Glentoran's superb centre-back Gary Smyth won the Player of the Year award, while his boss, Roy Coyle, took the Manager prize.

Roy Kitson

Van Hooijdonk: green light after red card

Klaas-Jan Droppert on how the Feyenoord striker was allowed to play on despite a sending-off

HOLLAND

A NUMBER of controversial disciplinary decisions may prove to have had a crucial impact on the race for Holland's two Champions League places when the dust finally settles on the League campaign.

Feyenoord striker Pierre Van Hooijdonk scored a hat-trick in the 3-1 win over leaders PSV on May 18 to put his side within four points of the top and allow Ajax to go within three points of PSV with two games remaining. However, Van Hooijdonk was only playing after winning his appeal against suspension imposed following his sending-off in Feyenoord's tense Dutch Cup semi-final against Ajax.

The striker was shown the red card for appearing to kick Jelle Van Damme, though the Ajax defender declared immediately after the game that Van Hooijdonk hadn't touched him. However, Van Damme said the opposite in evidence to the FA disciplinary board, who then imposed a three-match ban on Van Hooijdonk.

Whatever the reason for Van Damme's change of mind, it was clear Feyenoord would be hard put to maintain their challenge without their top scorer. As it turned out, however, the sanction was lifted on appeal.

Strangely, an elbowing by Ajax's Zlatan Ibrahimovic and punch thrown by his team-mate Cristian Chivu went unnoticed by the referee during the Cup semi-final. Yet both were banned, for five and two matches respectively, after the FA viewed videos of the incidents. This time the bans stayed in place, meaning the Amsterdam club would miss two key players at a critical stage of the season.

National coach Dick Advocaat gave debuts to youngsters Arjen Robben (PSV) and Wesley Sneijder (Ajax) in the 1-1 friendly draw with Portugal in late April. In putting the Dutch ahead, Patrick Kluivert equalled Dennis Bergkamp's all-time national record tally of 37 goals.

AZ are the latest club in financial trouble, with debts of £4.8 million. But the players have refused to take a salary cut of 30 per cent, saying it is too severe.

Bowing out...Van Hooijdonk is sent off during the Dutch Cup semi-final

BELGIUM

Brugge bag glory, Lommel erased

NOT even a revamped First Division table caused by the liquidation of Lommel could prevent Club Brugge cruising to their first title in five years. For once, Trond Sollied's men managed to hang on after producing their customary storming start, and secured the crown with four matches to spare. With Cercle Brugge regaining their place among the elite as Second Division champions, the city had much to celebrate.

The top-flight table took on a slightly different look after Lommel failed to meet a final deadline to repay a relatively inconsequential debt of £32,000 to the federation. Until then, opponents were being credited with 5-0 wins against Lommel, who were unable to field a team, until the gravity of their plight became evident. After their failure to pay the debt their record was expunged and they were relegated all the way down to the Limburg provincial fourth division.

Nicholas Harling

PORTUGAL

Porto: two down, one to go

FC PORTO secured the first part of a potential treble when winning their 19th League title with four matches to spare in early May. They established an insurmountable lead after a 5-0 home victory over Santa Clara.

Porto's subsequent 3-2 win over Celtic in the UEFA Cup Final meant they would win a rare treble by defeating Uniao Leiria in the Portuguese Cup Final on June 15.

Benfica clinched second place in the League after a 4-2 win at Belenenses. Sporting Lisbon, last season's Double winners, were a distant third and set to part company with Romanian coach Laszlo Boloni.

Another top-flight departee is Jaime Pacheco, who led Boavista to their first League title in 2001. He announced he is quitting following a disappointing domestic season.

Victor Oliveira has failed to agree a new contract with Gil Vicente. The club enjoyed one of their best seasons this term under his management, but even the prospect of a UEFA Cup place could not persuade him to stay. Mario Reis, coach during the 1980s, will take the reins again.

Vitoria Setubal, top-flight stalwarts, were the first side to be definitely relegated after a 2-2 draw with Sporting Braga in mid-May.

Alberto da Silva

Cup double strike...Christian Gimenez

SWITZERLAND

Lausanne follow Lugano into bankruptcy

LAUSANNE-SPORTS, once the pride of the French-speaking Vaud region and with a clutch of championship and Cup trophies to their name, have been forced into bankruptcy because they are unable to pay players' and staff wages.

The club, long-time top division members, were demoted to the Second Division at the end of last season after being refused a licence to continue playing in the top flight because of their large debts. Now their future is uncertain.

"It is all over. We want to start with a clean slate," said president Philippe Guignard. "We want to look to the future with our under-21 team. We hope to be able to continue in the inter-regional Liga 2 under a new name – FC Lausanne."

Six weeks before, fellow Second Division side Lugano had also been forced into liquidation with massive debts and are due to resurface next season with their renamed youth team in Liga 2.

Basle retained the Cup after overpowering Neuchatel Xamax 6-0 in the Final. Argentinian striker Christian Gimenez scored twice to help Basle to their seventh Cup triumph.

It has not been so easy for Christian Gross' side in the League, however, with Basle trailing leaders Grasshopper by three points with three games to play. In an ill-tempered top-of-the-table clash, which finished 2-2, Basle's Mario Cantaluppi and Grasshopper's Ricardo Cabanas were sent off for fighting.

Ivar von Rulach

AUSTRIA

Champion Daum set to move on

CHRISTOPH DAUM led Austria Wien to their first League title in 10 years, then fuelled rumours that he might leave the newly-crowned champions for Germany or England at the end of the season.

"I have received various interesting offers, especially from England as well as my home country," Daum told Austrian state TV channel ORF. The 50-year-old claimed Schalke were one of the sides to have approached him, along with clubs in the Premiership, Turkey and Spain.

Talking a move...Christoph Daum

Speaking ahead of the Austrian Cup Final, which pitted Austria Wien with Karnten, Daum said: "Winning the Double would be the icing on the cake. No matter where I will be next season, Vienna has been a great stage in my coaching career. But the title does not automatically guarantee a spot in the Champions League, unlike in England for example. And Europe is where I want to play."

Austria Wien romped to the championship, clinching it with five games to play with a 2-1 victory at closest challengers Grazer AK. Daum, who replaced Walter Schachner (now in charge of Grazer) last autumn, adds the title to those he won in Germany with Stuttgart and Turkey with Besiktas.

Austria's city rivals Rapid have dropped veteran playmaker and national team captain Andreas Herzog after he claimed in an interview he would "rather have accepted Austria Wien's offer [to join them]. There I would have earned six times as much and won the Double."

Harry Miltner

REP OF IRELAND

Shels open up lead

WITH Bohemians making a slow start in the defence of their League title, Dublin neighbours Shelbourne have been setting the pace. They led by two points from surprise package Waterford after seven games and were the only unbeaten side.

Shels have been powered by the goals of Jason Byrne, a cousin of Republic striker Robbie Keane and who joined from Bray Wanderers.

Fran Rooney, former manager of the Irish women's team, is the new chief executive of the FA of Ireland. "My aim is to see an Eircom League team reach the latter stages of the Champions League," said the 46-year-old. "That might be just a dream, but when I was a youngster so was the notion of the Republic reaching the World Cup finals."

National coach Brian Kerr gave debuts to Alan Lee of Rotherham and Sheffield Wednesday's Alan Quinn in the 1-0 friendly win over Norway at the end of April.

Keeper Dean Kiely has quit the international scene, ostensibly to prolong his career with Charlton, but no doubt disillusioned with playing understudy to Newcastle's Shay Given.

Sean Creedon

LIECHTENSTEIN

Burgmeier brings joy

THE national team recorded only their second victory when beating Saudi Arabia 1-0 in Vaduz on April 30. The goal came from FC Vaduz's Franz Burgmeier, who only started because Harry Zech was injured during the warm-up. The victory was even more surprising as the side were already without injured regulars Ronny Buchel and Thomas Nigg.

Graeme Crawford

Pro-file Kevin Vandenbergh

Lethal Genk striker chasing his father up the goal charts

GOALS flower on more than one branch of the Vandenbergh family tree. Two decades ago, Erwin Vandenbergh was one of the most prolific scorers in the history of Belgian football; now it is his son Kevin catching the eye as a striker for Genk.

Erwin is a hard act to follow, having topped the Belgian First Division's scoring chart in no fewer than six seasons. But Kevin, just turned 20, has certainly not been overawed.

A healthy supply of goals over the past two seasons for Westerlo and Genk have proved the youngster is not just trading on an illustrious name, that he has inherited his father's penalty area stealth and controlled finishing. "I have never been particularly bothered when people compare my dad and myself," says Kevin. "It's something I've always lived with. In football matches as a kid, I'd be pointed out as Erwin Vandenbergh's son and, straight away, two markers would be put on me."

Few could cast doubt on Kevin's immense promise. Fresh from scoring 14 goals for Westerlo in 2001-02, he by no means took the easy option by signing for new Belgian champions Genk last summer. With Wesley Sonck and Beli Dagano firmly ensconced as Genk's first-choice strikers and Japanese international forward Takayuki Suzuki recently added to the squad, Vandenbergh junior knew he was far from guaranteed regular first-team football. Sure enough, he spent the first two months on the bench, but scored his first goal for Genk in October as a substitute in a 4-0 win over Beveren. A week later, he scored the winner at Mons and was then used from the start in a home Champions League tie with Real Madrid, performing ably in a 1-1 draw. "The chance to play against world-class opponents in the Champions League was one of the main reasons I came to Genk," said Kevin at the time.

A hat-trick in Genk's 9-0 thrashing of Mechelen in November confirmed he had progressed from bit-part to starring role, and he reached the dozen-goal mark as the season drew to its conclusion.

Vandenbergh's performances have proved a rare positive note in an off-key season for Genk, who failed to secure a UEFA Cup place let alone mount any sort of title defence. "Apart from young Vandenbergh, all the other new signings [Suzuki, ex-Cercle Brugge midfielder Vincent Euvrard and Croat defender Igor Tomasic] were failures," stormed club president Jos Vaessen. "Vandenbergh was the only one to look the part."

Twenty-one years after his dad fired in the only goal to give Belgium a shock victory over holders Argentina in the opening game of the 1982 World Cup finals, Vandenbergh junior is preparing to make a similar impact.

Nick Bidwell

FACT FILE
Club Genk
Country Belgium
Born May 16, 1983, in Bonheiden
Previous club Westerlo

Laudrup the real deal for Brondby

Success has secured the coach a two-year extension to his contract, writes Jim Holden

Outlook brighter...Laudrup's commitment to attack is at last reaping benefits

DENMARK

MICHAEL LAUDRUP gave Brondby a massive boost by agreeing a two-year extension to his contract in the very week that they reached the Cup Final and went top of the Superliga. He has committed himself to the club at least to the end of the 2005-2006 season.

Denmark's greatest soccer legend endured a rough start to life as a coach last autumn when reigning champions Brondby struggled to adapt to his bold, attacking philosophy. But since the winter break Laudrup's side have been virtually unstoppable, surprising everyone by clawing back an eight-point deficit on runaway early leaders FC Copenhagen.

"I'm happy with the way things are going and there is no reason to postpone signing the contract," said Laudrup, who was formerly assistant to Morten Olsen with the national side.

The players certainly appreciate his leadership now. "Michael has given us more freedom to play, and that makes the game so enjoyable," says skipper Per Nielsen. "In training we do more ballwork and a lot of positional play. But we can also think for ourselves within the system. It seems to be working."

So it does. A 2-1 victory away to AaB Aalborg coupled with a surprise 3-2 home defeat for FC Copenhagen against Viborg put Brondby a point clear at the top of the Superliga with five matches remaining. The destination of the title could well hinge on the June 18 clash between the top two, with Brondby having home advantage.

Former champions Herfolge have already won promotion back to the Superliga, but near neighbours Koge are likely to be relegated after just one season in the top flight.

NORWAY

Sogndal kids full of surprises

TWO old friends met as managers of the League's top two clubs in mid-May. That Aage Hareide, manager of long-time champions Rosenborg, was one of them could hardly have surprised anyone; but that Jan Halvor Halvorsen, now at Sogndal, was the other was a major turn-up.

Halvorsen has already made his enthusiasm and energetic coaching style pay dividends at Sogndal, having taken over a promising young squad at the start of the season. The club, from the tiny town of the same name in western Norway, finished only two places off the relegation zone last term. But the youngsters have blossomed this spring under Halvorsen's tutelage, going on a 16-game unbeaten run since the turn of the year. This was ended by the Trondheim club, but the champions' 3-1 win came only after Sogndal had taken a first-half lead.

Back with a record...Petter Belsvik

Despite the defeat, Halvorsen expressed his pleasure at his players' performance, saying: "We came here to win and had we taken our chances in the first half, we would not have let Rosenborg into the match again."

The money gained from the sale of Eirik Bakke to Leeds some years ago has allowed Sogndal to build fine indoor and outdoor training facilities, with the squad showing the benefits on the field. A revitalised Haavard Flo has hit the net regularly – five goals in the first six League games – which earned him a call-up to the national squad for the late-May friendly against Finland. Canadian Marco Reda and Under-21 forward Kristian Ystaas have also impressed with vital goals.

Lillestrom's German forward Uwe Rosler has been forced to take a prolonged break after being diagnosed with cancer. His absence, coupled with a number of injuries, forced Lillestrom to turn to veteran striker Petter Belsvik, who retired last year. Fortunately for the club, Belsvik was more than willing to restart his career as it would give him the chance to become Norway's all-time League top scorer. This he achieved with a penalty in his first match back, against Tromso, in a 3-2 win. The strike put Belsvik on 159 League goals, one more than Odd Iversen (father of Tottenham's Steffen Iversen), who retired in 1982.

Sigurd Odegaard

SWEDEN

Stockholm trio lead the way

THE race for the championship could well become an all-Stockholm affair, with Djurgardens, Hammarby and AIK all having made bright starts.

Hammarby, in particular, seem to be buzzing again after finishing only ninth last season. "There is a fresh wind blowing in Swedish soccer today and its name is Hammarby," according to one ardent fan, and few would disagree with him after seeing them beat much-vaunted Malmo 2-1 in round five.

However, Europe's summer transfer window may yet undermine the Stockholm teams' chances. Djurgardens, the champions, could be the main losers if midfielder Kim Kallstrom continues attracting scouts from big foreign clubs such as Liverpool and on-loan striker Johan Elmander is recalled by Feyenoord. Meanwhile, Hammarby's Kennedy Bakircioglu, two-goal star against Malmo, is also creating interest abroad. By comparison, it has been remarkably quiet at AIK, where Richard Money has made a promising start as coach.

Helsingborgs, in fourth place after six rounds, can breath again. Their League licence was renewed after doubts were raised about the nature of the loan they received from the city council, which probably saved the club from going under. Even so, a mass player exodus is expected once the season is over.

Pentti Hietanen

Stepping down...Atli Edvaldsson

FINLAND

Corrected error leaves Jari in the clear

JARI LITMANEN has achieved the remarkable feat of becoming Finland's top all-time international scorer without kicking a ball. When he scored his second goal in the 4-1 victory over Portugal in March 2002 it was thought he had merely drawn level with record-holder Ari Hjelm on 21 goals. However, a recently-published reference book could find only 20 by Hjelm in official full internationals. The FA confirmed this was the correct total, leaving Litmanen out on his own.

The Ajax player confirmed his status by converting a penalty, his 22nd goal, in Finland's 3-0 win over Iceland in their late-April friendly.

Litmanen, who was sidelined by injury for the first three months of this year, has also signed a new one-year contract with Ajax.

Domestic champions HJK Helsinki suffered a late blow in the run-up to the new season when international midfielder Mika Lehkosuo announced his retirement because of a persistent knee injury.

Meanwhile, Pertti Lundell, one of Finland's senior coaches, was forced to step down at Inter-Turku because of health problems. His replacement is former international Kari Virtanen.

Pentti Hietanen

ICELAND

FA look abroad for new national coach

SMALL Nordic country with proud footballing tradition seeks national coach. Salary demands should not resemble international telephone number. Icelanders need not apply.

Interested? Well, these are the broad terms of an advert currently occupying the situations vacant column at the Icelandic FA following the resignation of Atli Edvaldsson.

The coach's decision to end his 41-month reign came in the wake of the 3-0 defeat away to Finland at the end of April, and was ratified at an FA Council meeting 10 days later.

The decision to search for a foreign coach ends a 12-year spell of native national supremos, but it could be some months before the successful candidate is named.

FA technical director and former Iceland skipper Asgeir Sigurvinsson has been charged with guiding the side through the summer. Although one of Iceland's greatest players, his coaching experience is confined to a short and largely undistinguished spell at Reykjavik club Fram.

His most immediate task will be to find some means of putting fire into the bellies of a distinctly jaded squad as they attempt to scramble back into the reckoning in their Euro 2004 group. Sigurvinnson's first major decision was to name as his assistant Logi Olafsson, who himself steered the national side for 14 matches between 1996 and 1997.

Champions KR continued their pre-season winning ways with a 2-0 victory over Faroese counterparts HB to lift the Atlantic Cup.

IA, who won the inaugural edition of the tournament last year, also claimed an early piece of silverware by beating Keflavik 4-2 on penalties in the Icelandic League Cup Final following a 1-1 draw.

Rab Christie

Pro-file Mikael Forssell

Finnished article set for new start at Chelsea

THE attempts by Borussia Monchengladbach fans to persuade Finnish forward Mikael Forssell to extend his stay at their club seem likely to come to nought. The 22-year-old, on loan from Chelsea for the second half of this season, was so impressive that supporters of the German club launched a campaign to make the move permanent. Hopeful of contributing to the transfer fee, the collection tins began to be passed around, and a recent home game against Hansa Rostock was declared 'Mikael Forssell Day', with banners in his honour all round the Bokelberg stadium and fans creating a Finnish flag by holding up blue and white cards.

Forssell admitted he had never experienced such warmth from a crowd, but sentiment only goes so far in today's football. He still has two years left on his contract with Chelsea, and, given his Bundesliga form, the London club would be foolish not to bring him back to Stamford Bridge, especially with Champions League football on the horizon. Even if they were to sell him, Borussia could never meet the suggested £6million price-tag.

If Chelsea wanted proof the Finn had fully recovered from the knee ligament injury he suffered last year, they had it in spades. "This spell at Gladbach was just what I needed," says Forssell, who lit up the Bundesliga with his speed, dribbling prowess, powerful shooting and aerial ability. "I was out for eight months and the Chelsea coach, Claudio Ranieri, and I agreed that regular football during a loan spell would be better for me than sitting on the bench in the Premiership."

Forssell comes from a footballing family. His sister Christina is the most capped international in the history of the Finnish women's side, while his father Bengt was a top-flight player too. Coached by his dad, Mikael swiftly developed into one of Europe's hottest prospects, but while the likes of Ajax, Inter and Bayern Munich all hoped to snare him, it was Chelsea who signed him in January 1999 from HJK Helsinki.

"I had the feeling Chelsea were the club who wanted me the most," explains Forssell. But despite several eye-catching cameos, the presence in the Chelsea front-line of Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink, Gianfranco Zola and Eidur Gudjohnsen restricted Forssell's first-team chances. By farming him out to First Division side Crystal Palace in 2000-01, Chelsea made it clear they thought he still had a lot to learn. He might not have been the Finnished article then. He is now, though.

Nick Bidwell

Fact file

Club Borussia Monchengladbach (Ger) (on loan from Chelsea, Eng)
Country Finland
Born March 15, 1981, in Steinfurt, Germany
Previous clubs HJK Helsinki, Chelsea (Eng), Crystal Palace (Eng), Chelsea (Eng)
International debut June 1999, v Moldova
International caps 22 (8 goals)
Honours Finnish League 1997; Finnish Cup 1998

Besiktas mark centenary in style

Suna Erdem sees Istanbul's 'third' team outdo Galatasaray to take the title

TURKEY

THERE was sweet vindication for coach Mircea Lucescu as birthday boys Besiktas took the Turkish League title in their centenary year following one of the most exciting climaxes the championship has seen.

In a nail-biting and bad-tempered penultimate game, Besiktas beat defending champions and closest challengers Galatasaray 1-0 with a goal from Sergen Yalcin to secure the title for the first time since 1995. In the chaotic final minutes, two Galatasaray players were sent off after a punch-up, and a cameraman and sundry bystanders had to be ejected from the pitch before the match could resume.

The triumph was especially poignant for Lucescu, who guided Galatasaray to the title last season but was then sacked to make way for old Galatasaray hand Fatih Terim. The Romanian signed up with Besiktas and helped quietly take what is traditionally the third Istanbul club to the top of the table. In the process he became only the third manager to have won the title with two separate clubs in successive years.

Unlike Terim, and the panicky management at the virtually disintegrating Fenerbahce, Lucescu brought out the best in the players already at the club – indeed, midfielder Sergen, formerly an underachieving wild child, was one of the most impressive performers in the Turkish League this season. Besiktas fans have also relished the way Lucescu turned their team into a free-flowing, entertaining side, but also one that was hard to beat.

The club had been hurt by the surprise sacking of the popular French forward Pascal Nouma – for fiddling inside his shorts in a bizarre post-goal celebration – with just six weeks of the season to go. But as Besiktas continued to churn out good results, it was their rivals who got increasingly wound up, with Galatasaray's management even complaining that sentimentality over Besiktas's centenary had made referees more sympathetic to the Black Eagles.

The season also threw up new heroes in Genclerbirligi, who finished third. Ersun Yanal's men played the best football of any side, and consistently upset the Big Three of Galatasaray, Fenerbahce and the new champions Besiktas.

Victorious...Besiktas coach Lucescu is hugged by Brazilian defender Zago

GREECE

Seven up for Olympiakos

OLYMPIAKOS secured a record seventh straight title on the final day of the season having given themselves a decisive advantage the previous week with a 3-0 rout of Panathinaikos. That victory gave them the same number of points as their rivals at the top of the table and a better head-to-head record – the means of separating teams in Greece if level on points. Olympiakos therefore had only to beat Xanthi on the final day to clinch the championship, a feat they achieved with ease, 5-1.

Decisive...Olympiakos keep out Panathinaikos for a crucial 3-0 win

The run of seven titles beats Olympiakos' own record of six, set in the 1950s. But it was a far from trouble-free season. The team performed poorly in Europe and in many domestic matches, and went through three coaches (Takis Lemonis, Yiannis Kollias and Srecko Katanec) before appointing current boss Oleg Protasov.

Although Panathinaikos took second place ahead of AEK Athens and therefore Greece's second direct Champions League place, they will be haunted by the Olympiakos defeat. The loss prompted coach Sergio Markarian to offer to step down, while president Angelos Filippidis promised investment in the playing squad during the summer.

"I apologise to the club's supporters. The title's been lost," Filippidis said after the Olympiakos game. "Olympiakos are not worthy champions based on one game. If we consider the entire season, AEK Athens deserved to win it. If we took away the first three rounds of play [Pana lost their first three games] then we would deserve to be champions."

PAOK Salonika won their fifth Greek Cup Final when beating Aris 1-0 at their home Toumba stadium. Midfielder Georgios Georgiadis scored the winner in the 24th minute.

Lou Economopoulos

SERBIA & MONTENEGRO

Partizan achieve the inevitable

FOUR rounds before the end of the season came confirmation of what had appeared a certainty from the early stages of the League campaign – as Partizan Belgrade secured their 18th championship title with a 4-0 victory against Vojvodina Novi Sad.

The side, guided during the latter part of the season by Lothar Matthaus after he took over from Ljubisa Tumbakovic, deserved their success. Zvonimir Vukic (see profile, right) and co were the dominant team throughout the season, and no other title hopefuls showed anything like Partizan's consistency.

Off the pitch, the Belgrade police have charged Obilic president Svetlana Raznatovic with misuse of her official position. According to the indictment, Raznatovic embezzled £7.8million of player transfer fees between 1998 and March 2003.

The charge, coupled with the fact she had been in prison since March 18 because of her links to the mafia, led the wife of the late warlord Arkan to go on hunger strike.

Vladimir Novak

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

Season reaches passionate end

THE top two sides – Leotar of Trebinje and Sarajevo team Zeljeznicar – met in the League and the first leg of the Cup Final within three days as the season reached an exciting climax.

Defending champions Zeljeznicar came away from Trebinje with a 2-2 draw in the League clash to stay level on points with their rivals with two games to play. However, it was the scenes at the end of the game that aroused most interest.

The match had been played under tight security because of ethnic tensions between the fans – Trebinje is a Serb side, Zeljeznicar Muslim. With the game over, the authorities' fears of violence appeared justified when groups of Leotar fans ran towards the Zeljeznicar supporters. However, just as they appeared about to attack, they stopped and started bowing to their rivals, handing them club scarves as a mark of respect.

Since the first match had finished so peacefully, everyone expected the second one, again in Trebinje, to be played in the same atmosphere. But during the national anthem Leotar's Slavoljub Djordjevic grabbed his crotch with one hand and made a provocative sign towards the crowd with the other, holding three fingers in the air – a gesture of Serbian pride. The player's action earned him a ban after the game, which ended 0-0.

Zdravko Reic

Dinamo star...top scorer Olic

CROATIA

Blazevic back on top

DINAMO ZAGREB secured the championship with two games to spare as closest challengers Hajduk Split continued to throw away points against modest opposition.

The title is another triumph for Dinamo coach Miroslav Blazevic, the former Croatia boss, who led Dinamo to the Yugoslav championship as far back as 1982.

Forward Ivica Olic was the team's best player this season and has now won two successive titles, having been with FC Zagreb last term.

Zdravko Reic

Round-up

Sliema supreme

SLIEMA WANDERERS secured their 24th **MALTESE** League title after beating Pieta Hotspurs 2-1.

Coach Edward Aquilina's success came in his first season back in charge, having suffered relegation with the club 20 years ago.

Marsa were relegated along with Mosta.

Domenico Aquilina

FC LJUBLJANA, destined to finish well clear of the drop zone in **SLOVENIA**, have been threatened with relegation if they do not pay their debts.

The capital city side have already been docked three points this season.

Zdravko Reic

Momcilo Mitevski became the ninth **MACEDONIAN** top-division coach to lose his job since the winter, resigning from Sileks after a run of defeats. Former coach Lazar Plackov has taken over.

Michel Stojmanovski

Pro-file Zvonimir Vukic

Partizan playmaker dubbed a 'Maradona' by Matthaus

PARTIZAN BELGRADE attacking midfielder Zvonimir Vukic has a lot to live up to now his club coach Lothar Matthaus has dubbed him the "Maradona of the Balkans".

Of course, countless so-called Maradona clones have come and gone, and such comparisons can be a cross to bear. Yet Matthaus insists he is not being hyperbolical. "I see a top-class young number 10 in Vukic," says the former German international. "He has all the qualities of a fine midfield general: vision, technical ability, clever movement and natural authority. He always wants the ball and makes things happen. I want Partizan to get the ball to the strikers quicker, and Zvonimir has been exceptional in doing that.

"And he's a brilliant goalscorer, striking the ball well from long distance and making well-timed runs into the box. It's not by accident Vukic is top of the scoring lists in Serbia this season [22 goals in 34 League games]."

There were no shortage of star turns this season as Partizan strolled to their second successive League crown. Attackers Danko Lazovic and Ivica Iliev, and midfielders Igor Duljaj, Sasa Ilic and Nikola Malbasa were all outstanding. But 23-year-old Vukic outshone them all. Fitting, then, that the 4-0 win over Vojvodina that clinched the title featured a Vukic hat-trick.

Although Vukic's senior international debut for Serbia & Montenegro (formerly Yugoslavia) last February was overshadowed by the loss of two Euro 2004 qualifying points in a 2-2 home draw with Azerbaijan, his was a competent enough display. He retained his place for subsequent friendlies against Bulgaria and Germany.

The Partizan management claim they intend to hold on to Vukic, though Parma, Middlesbrough and a number of German clubs have been linked with the playmaker.

He has already had a taste of foreign football, having quit unfashionable northern outfit Proleter Zrenjanin for the bright lights of Atletico Madrid in 1998. The dream turned sour, however, since after nearly two seasons playing for the 'B' team and still no sign of promotion to the first 11, he opted to return home, this time to Partizan. "Even if it didn't work out for me at Atletico, I became a better player," says Vukic. "I was not the boy who began at Proleter. Since coming back, I have helped Partizan to two League titles and feel confident I can progress and win trophies."

Nick Bidwell

Fact file

Club Partizan Belgrade
Country Serbia & Montenegro
Born July 19, 1979, in Zrenjanin
Previous clubs Proleter Zrenjanin, Atletico Madrid B (Spa)
International debut February 2003, v Azerbaijan
International caps 3 (0 goals)
Honours Serbo-Montenegrin (Yugoslav) League 2002, 2003

Gazzayev in peril

Twin defeats have put the national coach under severe pressure, writes Victor Gusev

RUSSIA

VALERI GAZZAYEV'S future as national coach was in jeopardy after two humiliating away defeats in spring Euro 2004 qualifiers. Russia were beaten 3-1 by Albania in Shkoder and then 1-0 by Georgia in Tbilisi to put their chances of reaching the finals in peril.

Russia are second in Group 10, two points behind Switzerland but only one ahead of Albania. Defeat in Switzerland on June 7 could well cost Gazzayev his job, while even a draw may force him to give up one or other of his two coaching roles. Like his predecessor, Oleg Romantsev, Gazzayev has continued to combine his Russia post with that of being a club manager, in his case CSKA Moscow.

On the domestic front, two former Soviet internationals have had major problems since returning to coach in Russia after spells in the West. Igor Shalimov, a Moscow Spartak star of the 1980s who went on to play for Internazionale, is desperately trying to lift Uralan Elista from the depths of the League table. Meanwhile, Sergei Aleinikov, a former Juventus player, was fired after Torpedo-Metallurg took only three points from eight League games.

Aleinikov's replacement, 68-year-old Soviet football legend Valentin Ivanov, produced instant results. Torpedo-Metallurg beat highly-rated Kryliya Sovetov Samara 3-0 in Ivanov's first game in charge. He said the team were physically and tactically OK, but "just needed a strong hand".

After nine rounds CSKA held a five-point lead over Moscow rivals Dinamo, but champions Lokomotiv were struggling.

Job on the line...Valeri Gazzayev

On target...Tomas Rosicky

CZECH REPUBLIC

Despite Bohemians, it's rhapsody for Sparta

SPARTA PRAGUE'S coronation as League champions was performed off the field after their potentially title-clinching game away to city rivals Bohemians was abandoned because of crowd trouble.

The leaders travelled to their relegation-threatened neighbours needing only three points from their remaining three games to clinch the title. But after a disputed Martin Zboncak goal gave Sparta a 2-1 lead with 15 minutes remaining, referee Jaromir Hlavac was forced to call a halt when Bohemians fans attacked assistant referee Ladislav Talpa. They blamed him for the goal, feeling he should have flagged for offside.

A few days later the League awarded the game to Sparta, assuring them of the title while condemning Bohemians to relegation, along with Hradec Kralove.

Sparta's recent form has been patchy but nearest rivals Slavia Prague were unable to gain much ground. The champions were held to a 2-2 draw in Pribram and managed only one shot on goal during a 2-0 defeat by Viktoria Zizkov.

Slavia, on the other hand, continued to drop points away from home, and their 0-0 draw in Brno on May 10 allowed Sparta to open up a decisive six-point lead.

The national team's spectacular form continued with a 4-0 demolition of a nearly full-strength Turkey in a friendly in Teplice on April 30. The result was even more impressive given that the Czechs were missing captain Pavel Nedved, and that all the goals were scored in the first half, when both teams were at their strongest. Borussia Dortmund's Tomas Rosicky and Jan Koller, and Liverpool's Vladimir Smicer and Milan Baros were the scorers.

Sam Beckwith

UKRAINE

Shakhtar stunned at home

DEFENDING champions and leaders Shakhtar Donetsk lost their 45-match home unbeaten run when they surprisingly went down 3-1 to promoted Volyn-1. Closest challengers Kyiv Dynamo took advantage by beating Karpaty 2-0 at home to cut Shakhtar's lead to two points.

A 26,000 crowd in Donetsk saw the visitors totally dominate, with Azerbaijan midfielder Samir Aliyev scoring twice.

Shakhtar won't be sorry to see the back of Volyn this season, nor will Dynamo. Volyn also ended Shakhtar's Ukrainian League record unbeaten run of 55 games earlier in the season. They then beat Dynamo the week before their triumph in Donetsk to set up a rare double over Ukraine's two leading clubs.

"My players were very poor," said Shakhtar coach Valeriy Yaremchenko. "They were undisciplined and constantly tried to show the fans artistic tricks. But we are not in the circus. We have to play football."

Shakhtar also failed to deliver in the Final of the inaugural Valerii Lobanovskyi Cup, losing 3-2 to Dynamo. Both sides saw off Russian opposition in the semi-finals, Shakhtar beating CSKA Moscow, Dynamo conquering Lokomotiv Moscow.

Meanwhile, Dynamo have unveiled a monument to Lobanovskyi outside their stadium, a year after the death of their legendary coach.

Oleg Zadernovsky

POLAND

Cup stays in Krakow

WISLA KRAKOW retained the Polish Cup after overcoming a shock 1-0 home first leg defeat in the Final to beat Wisla Plock 3-1 on aggregate.

"We wanted to show that we were defeated at home only by accident," said Marcin Kuzba, scorer of two goals in two minutes in the 3-0 second leg victory.

In the League, Wisla remained favourites to take the championship and complete the Double, though a 1-0 defeat at title challengers Katowice narrowed their lead to three points with four games to play.

At the bottom, Pogon Szczecin were the first side to be definitely relegated, followed by KSZO Ostrowiec. Pogon are also facing bankruptcy because of debts of £5 million, a situation that would lead to a drop even further down the League ladder.

In anticipation of this outcome, the fans have founded a new club – Pogon Szczecin Nowa (New Pogon) – are looking for financial support and believe their team will be able to join the Fourth Division next season.

Pawel Janas suffered his first defeat in his fifth game as national coach when Poland were beaten 3-1 by Belgium in Brussels at the end of April. Two of the home side's goals were gifted to them after defender Arkadiusz Glowacki and then keeper Mariusz Liberda carelessly lost possession. "Even amateurs cannot make such mistakes," said Janas.

The only positive note for the coach came in the second half when Jacek Krzynowek scored to confirm his return to top form after recovering from a long-term knee ligament injury.

"There is too much chaos in our team because we play each game with a different squad," claimed left-sided midfielder Kamil Kosowski. But while it is true that there have been a lot of changes in personnel, the absence of goalkeeper Jerzy Dudek, defender Jacek Bak and forwards Emmanuel Olisadebe and Maciej Zurawski through injury or illness could not excuse the very weak performance.

Dariusz Kurowski

Round-up

CSKA home and dry

Winning farewell...Balakov takes on Albania

CSKA SOFIA's six-year wait for a **BULGARIAN** League championship is over after a 2-0 win over Botev put them beyond reach of city rivals Levski. Dobrudzha and Rilski Sportist were relegated.

Krassimir Balakov signed off his international career by setting up Bulgaria's first goal in the 2-0 friendly win over Albania in late April. The national team captain, who won 92 caps, was a member of the team that reached the World Cup semi-finals in 1994.

Michael Bowesfield

In **ROMANIA**, Rapid Bucharest kicked off their derby away to National knowing the League title was already theirs after closest challengers Steaua had lost a few hours before. Rapid's subsequent draw put them 12 points clear with two games to play.

Sportul Studentesc, already in the relegation zone, became certainties to face the drop after being forced to forfeit their last three games because of unpaid debts.

Michael Bowesfield

A dull goalless derby between **HUNGARIAN** title-chasers MTK and leaders Ferencvaros left the latter firmly in the driving seat.

Despite Dragan Vukmir's sending off for a professional foul on League top scorer Bela Illes early on, 'Fradi' held on to secure a draw and stay five points clear of their cross-city rivals.

With both teams missing players through injury, the match was a low-key affair. Even the fans voted with their feet, only 5,000 turning up.

A few days earlier, Ferencvaros lifted the Cup, beating Debrecen 2-1 in the Final, thanks to two second-half goals from Attila Tokoli.

Peterjon Cresswell

Pro-file Vladimir Janocko

Classy Slovak driving Austria Wien towards Champions League

SLOVAKIA boss Ladislav Jurkemik will be hoping the muscular problems that have troubled his Austria Wien midfield star Vladimir Janocko in recent months will not prevent him lining up in their June Euro 2004 qualifiers at home to Turkey and in England.

So often the inspiration as Austria Wien totally dominated the domestic scene this term, the 26-year-old is in the form of his life. He can also take heart from his performance during Slovakia's 2-1 home defeat by England last October.

While a sodden pitch in Bratislava that night was anything but conducive to intricate football, Janocko dealt with the conditions as well as anyone. His comfort on the ball and drive frequently caused England problems, and it was his run and cross that led to Szilard Nemeth putting Slovakia ahead. "We thought we played well and deserved something from the game," says Janocko. "We put up a good fight, took the lead and held it deep into the second half. Our performance was encouraging.

"Defeats by England and Turkey have damaged our chances of reaching the play-offs. But it's not over yet. We have our good players. On a given day, we can give problems to anyone, even World Cup semi-finalists Turkey, and England, still one of the best international teams around. We'll be motivated to cause a surprise."

Austria Wien certainly snared a bargain when they signed Janocko from Greek side Xanthi in summer 2001 for just £1.5 million. No one in Austria can match him for refined technique, dribbling ability and free-kick prowess. He scores goals – a dozen in the League this term – and does not shirk when it comes to workrate. No wonder 'Ocki' was elected Austria's Player of the Year for 2002 by the country's top-flight coaches, becoming only the third foreigner to win the award.

"Janocko is the complete modern player," says ex-Austria Wien coach Walter Schachner, now at Grazer AK. "I think so highly of him that I'm sure he would do himself justice at a big European club."

Janocko has already experienced the Champions League with Slovaks Kosice, although they lost all their first round matches in 1997-98. Yet he still has good memories. "I was only 20 and it was awesome to play teams of the stature of Manchester United, Juventus and Feyenoord," he says. "We were huge underdogs and did well just to qualify for the group stage.

"Now the Champions League is the next step for Austria Wien. This is a club of great ambition, one that has to keep going forward."

Nick Bidwell

Fact file

Club **Austria Wien (Aut)**
Country **Slovakia**
Born **December 2, 1976, in Kosice**
Previous clubs **Kosice, Xanthi (Gre)**
International debut **September 1999, v Romania**
International caps **26 (4 goals)**
Honours **Slovak League 1997, 1998; Austrian League 2003**

Menace...Cruzeiro's Colombian striker Victor Aristizabal (in blue) has been in free-scoring form

Government 1 Directors 0

The clubs and federation were forced to call off a strike over the new Supporters Statute under pressure from Congress, media and fans. Brian Homewood reports

BRAZIL

BRAZIL'S clubs have failed in an attempt to sabotage the Supporters Statute, the new law introduced with the aim of providing a better deal for the country's long-suffering fans.

The law, which among other things guarantees orderly ticket sales, safer stadiums and clean toilets for supporters – who in the past have generally been treated like cattle – officially came into effect on May 16 after being signed by President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva.

Other measures include forcing clubs to announce attendances and gate receipts for each match, to provide either a numbered seat or place on the terracing for each supporter, and one ambulance per 10,000 fans. Club directors will be held responsible for fights or accidents caused by poor security, and referees will be chosen by draws before each round of matches, a move designed to stop clubs vetoing certain officials through backroom wheeling and dealing.

Within four days of the bill coming into effect, however, a group of directors from some of the biggest clubs plus the Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF) announced they were paralysing domestic football, insisting they could not comply with items such as the one concerning numbered places.

Predictably, Vasco da Gama president Eurico Miranda was one of the ringleaders. He said: "This law was not meant to be implemented. It's just a witch-hunt against some directors." Doubtless, Miranda is aware that had the law been in effect three years ago, he could have been in serious trouble. An accident at Vasco's Sao Januario stadium during the Brazilian championship Final against Sao Caetano left more than 50 fans injured. Witnesses said the stadium was filled beyond capacity when a fence collapsed. The injured fans were treated on the pitch but Miranda was infamously seen ordering ambulances and victims to be removed so the match could restart. Eventually, Rio de Janeiro governor Anthony Garotinho ordered the game to be abandoned.

A hasty climbdown

The anti-statute stoppage lasted little over 24 hours before CBF president Ricardo Teixeira announced the weekend's games would go ahead. "We didn't want supporters to suffer by the postponement of the games," he said in a television interview with an angelic expression on his face.

In fact, the CBF had been left with little choice. The decision to paralyse all football activities had met with a barrage of criticism from supporters and the media, and if the perpetrators had been expecting a government climbdown, then they had badly miscalculated.

Sports minister Agnelo Queiroz warned that he might hand out 10-year suspensions for directors involved in a lock-out. Aldo Rebelo, the government leader in Congress, said: "The law has to be obeyed and the CBF cannot be above the law." Fans described the stoppage as "absurd", with one saying: "It's the supporters who keep the clubs going. We deserve respect." Another, writing in to Globo television, said: "It's difficult to believe the country that has won five World Cups isn't capable of organising its football."

Lance published a front-page editorial on the matter. "It's blackmail against society," it read. "The bad directors just want to keep everything at it is. They don't want to publish their accounts. They're afraid of the law."

The paper's outspoken columnist Juca Kfouri said the government had scored a major victory. "The ridiculous attempt at a lock-out collapsed in the face of the resistance of a government that stayed firm to its principles."

So it was back to normal, and that basically meant chasing Brazilian championship leaders Cruzeiro, who remained unbeaten for 36 matches in a run stretching back to October.

Former Corinthians striker Deivid, with 10 goals in nine games, and his Colombian strike partner, Victor Aristizabal, with nine, spearhead an attack that has been averaging a fraction under three goals a game under controversial former national coach Vanderlei Luxemburgo.

Cruzeiro's run included a 2-0 win away to defending champions Santos, who lie in third place without having quite found the electrifying form they enjoyed last year.

Luxemburgo, who coached Santos before walking out on them for Corinthians, was given his usual welcome back to the Vila Belmiro stadium: fans chanted "mercenary" and symbolically threw coins at him.

"This situation has to come to an end. It shouldn't be possible that a club like Santos allows its fans to attack the rival coach," he said.

Luxemburgo had also been on the warpath after Internacional briefly overtook his team when they were awarded two points by a tribunal after Ponte Preta fielded an ineligible player against them.

The match had ended 1-1 but, after the tribunal, Ponte Preta's point was deducted, with Inter given two more. Curiously the teams' won-drawn-lost records and goal differences were not affected. Therefore, Internacional had a record of played nine, won five, drawn two and lost two totalling 19 points.

This peculiar Brazilian manner of dealing with teams who field ineligible players has caused trouble in the past.

"We will only know at the end of the championship how important these two points were," said Luxemburgo. "Football should be played and won on the field. If there is an irregularity, the right thing to do would be to take the points away [from the offending team] without giving them to the opposition."

Rojas steps up at Sao Paulo

Five coaches had lost their jobs after the first nine rounds of games – a fairly small number by Brazilian standards – including the long-suffering Oswaldo Oliveira at Sao Paulo.

After six months of pressure, Oliveira was finally dismissed less than 24 hours before the meeting with Figueirense. He had just taken a practice session, and picked the team, when he was told of his fate.

Oliveira was replaced on an interim basis by Roberto Rojas, the former Chilean goalkeeper known as the Condor who was involved in the infamous firecracker incident during a World Cup qualifier against Brazil at the Maracana stadium in 1989.

Rojas, who has been Sao Paulo's goalkeeper coach up until now, collapsed to the ground, apparently covered in blood, after the firecracker landed near him, prompting Chile to walk off the field. FIFA later banned Rojas for life and Chile from the 1994 World Cup.

Rojas was reprieved in 2001.

'Witch-hunt'...Vasco's Miranda

Pro-file Luis Fabiano

Sao Paulo's leopard-like striker on the prowl for a Brazil call-up

THE JOINT top scorer in last year's Brazilian championship is on course for a repeat this season. In between he was the leading marksman in the Sao Paulo state championship.

Luis Fabiano's river of goals could flow all the way to wider recognition, a prospect about which Reinaldo, his strike partner at Sao Paulo, is in no doubt. "I always say that the two best finishers I know are Ronaldo and Luis Fabiano," states Reinaldo. "Luis keeps proving it. If he keeps it up he'll soon play for the national side."

Hints have been dropped that the Sao Paulo forward will get his chance at the Confederations Cup, and as Brazil coach Carlos Alberto Parreira seeks to reduce his team's dependence on Ronaldo, Luis Fabiano is indeed an interesting option.

The 22-year-old is an exceptional talent, who moves with the speed, grace and power of a leopard. He is also improving, with a left foot now almost as deadly as his right, showing better aerial ability, and is learning to time and shape his runs more effectively. He may as yet lack the penalty area positional sense of his idol, Romario, but time is on his side.

A more urgent struggle is to keep his temperament in check. Like many Brazilian players, Luis Fabiano is the product of a broken home in the poor city suburbs, an environment producing a fair quantity of damaged individuals. Luis Fabiano burns a very short fuse, but the leopard is trying to change his spots. "I would score 10 goals but be remembered for receiving 11 yellow cards," he says. "There are times when I can't keep calm, and it's bad for me. I've had to reflect on what I want from my career, and find another way to take out my anger."

Disciplinary problems meant he was kicked out of Guarani, his hometown club, at the age of 15. Later, he was picked up by local rivals Ponte Preta, from where he earned a move to Rennes in France. It proved a frustrating experience. He had few opportunities and fell out with coach Christian Gourcuff. Sao Paulo took him on loan in 2001, and paid £2.7million for him a year later.

"I'd only go back to Europe to a top club in Spain or Italy," says the young forward. His form for Sao Paulo makes this a distinct possibility. At first he was a sideshow to the Franca-Kaka partnership. But with the former sold and the latter having a difficult year, Luis Fabiano is now the main event. "I want to take advantage of the best moment of my career," he says. "My aim is a place in the national team, and if the call comes I won't be afraid of anything."

Tim Vickery

Fact file

Club **Sao Paulo**
Country **Brazil**
Born **November 8, 1980, in Campinas**
Previous clubs **Ponte Preta, Rennes (Fra)**

Bilardo back to acclaim

Eric Weil on a tumultuous return to club management for the 1986 World Cup-winning coach

ARGENTINA

CARLOS BILARDO, Argentina's 1986 World Cup-winning coach, has returned for the fourth time as coach of Estudiantes de La Plata. But he could not have imagined the welcome he was to receive on the day he went to the club to sign on the dotted line.

Over a thousand people, with drums banging and horns blowing, surrounded the club's offices to welcome him back, scenes recorded by dozens of television channels and other media reporters.

Bilardo, who has recently been working as a soccer pundit on TV, did not immediately jump at the chance when offered the job – but he eventually agreed to take charge of the club with whom he gained fame as a player, winning the Libertadores Cup three times running, from 1968 to 1970.

Bilardo, who recently had dreams of running for the state presidency, takes over Estudiantes in the knowledge that he has plenty of time to reorganise the team, as they have no relegation worries. But he has already shown familiar eccentricities. On one day he made the team train for seven hours without a break to eat and also said that he would love to have Diego Maradona as assistant coach. This is not even a remote possibility since Maradona has never shown any inclination for regular work since he retired as a player.

As Bilardo moved in at Estudiantes, Osvaldo Ardiles was stepping down as Racing Club coach, quitting after they were knocked out of the Libertadores Cup by America of Colombia. Racing's second-round exit left them with nothing to play for, although Fernando Marin, manager of the company-owned club, wanted Ardiles to stay on. Team captain Claudio Ubeda added: "A good and open man is leaving us."

Ardiles had been the only coach of Argentina's Libertadores Cup sides to attempt to play his strongest team in both League and continental competition. His policy backfired with Racing's exit from the Libertadores coupled with indifferent League form – they lay 13 points behind leaders Boca Juniors and Velez Sarsfield after 13 closing championship rounds.

In another managerial change, Luis Cubilla walked out on lowly Talleres Cordoba after only a few weeks in charge to take the reins of last year's Libertadores winners, Olimpia of Paraguay.

Meanwhile, Independiente's Americo Gallego and San Lorenzo's Ruben Insua have both said they will quit when their contracts expire at the end of the season after their respective teams performed below expectations.

Velez maintained their surprise title challenge when beating Boca 2-0 at home in early May.

Off the field, a horrific battle between River Plate and Newell's Old Boys fans left two dead and many badly injured. Nine hundred supporters were detained by police after the incident, which happened when the two convoys of supporters' coaches crossed each other's path on the motorway. All 900 fans were later released without charge.

Familiar territory...Bilardo is back at the helm with Estudiantes for the fourth time

S American round-up

Same again for World Cup qualifying

THE South American confederation, CONMEBOL, has decided to make no changes to the qualifying format for the 2006 World Cup from that used for the last finals. Indeed, not only will the 10 countries once again play each other twice (a total of 18 ties each), but will also use the same order of fixtures. The only difference is that two matches will be played within a week, to cut travelling time for players based abroad.

Meanwhile, CONMEBOL president Nicolas Leoz said he has written to FIFA president Sepp Blatter accusing him of being a traitor for not backing South American calls for the World Cup to be increased from 32 to 36 teams. Leoz pointed out that CONMEBOL had backed Blatter twice in presidential elections.

URUGUAY: Champions Nacional, with international striker Sebastian Abreu back after suspension, have continued to dominate the opening championship. They were unbeaten after 13 of the 17 games and held a six-point lead over closest rivals Penarol.

Nacional had threatened to withdraw from the League after Abreu was suspended by the FA over suspected irregularities in his transfer from Mexico's Cruz Azul. The matter led to the resignation of two of the FA's five-man executive council and Penarol's Jose Damiani Jnr, the FA vice-president. Two weeks later a labour court ordered the governing body to allow Abreu to play again, but the rumpus continues. The situation is complicated by the fact that Abreu's contract actually belongs to Spain's Deportivo La Coruna.

COLOMBIA: Atletico Huila's Fernando Uribe became the youngest player ever to score in the domestic First Division when getting off the mark in the 2-2 draw with Tulua aged 15 years, three months and 22 days. His team-mate Harold Romana, who is four months and three days older, set the previous record last season.

Union Magdalena's Ivan Valenciano became the joint all-time League top scorer with his 211th goal recently, equalling the mark set by Argentinian Hugo Londero 22 years ago.

Both Cali teams, America and Deportivo, qualified for the eight-team opening championship play-offs despite fielding reserve teams on several occasions because of Libertadores Cup commitments. Champions Independiente Medellin missed the cut, while the failure of city rivals Atletico Nacional to make the play-offs cost coach Alexis Garcia his job. Juan Pelaez is the new man in charge.

PARAGUAY: Libertad took the opening championship with a 1-0 aggregate win over Guarani in the Final. Gustavo Morinigo scored the goal, in the home second leg. The victory books Libertad, last season's overall champions, a place in next year's Libertadores Cup.

ECUADOR: Controversial 2002 World Cup referee Byron Moreno has returned to action in the First Division following a 20-match suspension. This was imposed by the FA after he added on excessive stoppage time at the end of last year's clash between his hometown team LDU Quito and Barcelona. LDU scored twice during the added time, coming from behind to win the game.

PERU: Universitario players have threatened to go on strike as they are owed almost two months' wages. The team have also been suffering on the pitch, losing the classic Lima derby against leaders Alianza 4-2.

Champions Sporting Cristal have sacked Brazilian coach Rene Weber after the club fell four points behind Alianza.

CHILE: Colombian Faustino Asprilla added to his run of vital goals for Universidad de Chile when scoring the last-minute winner in the 3-2 defeat of Universidad Catolica in the 'university' derby. Uni Chile have said they want to renew Asprilla's contract when it runs out at the end of June.

Union Espanola have had three points deducted because coach Fernando Carvallo was not properly registered.

Eric Weil

Return to action...Nacional forward Abreu

Red menace...Toluca striking hero Cardozo

MEXICO

Down to the wire

THE league stage of the closing championship had one of the most exciting finishes for many years, with five of the quarter-finals berths still up for grabs on the final day and many of those deciding games still in the balance late into the second half.

After the storm cleared, America, Necaxa and Santos Laguna were out, Toluca, Atlas, Atlante and Veracruz were through (joining Monterrey, Tigres and Morelia), and Colibries were relegated. Cruz Azul, who performed heroics in squeezing through to a play-off for the eighth quarter-final place after a terrible start to the campaign, promptly lost to Guadalajara.

Toluca was the scene of a spectacular match, with both they and Santos needing a win to assure themselves of a place in the last eight. The first half ended with Santos ahead 3-2, but after the break Toluca turned the tie around, inspired by hat-trick hero Jose Cardozo, to win 4-3. The Paraguayan striker thus won the League top scorer title for the second time in a row, with 18 goals.

Morelia finished with 35 points, the highest total among the 20 top-flight clubs, and fully deserved their quarter-final spot. Daniel Passarella's Monterrey finished first in their group, assuring qualification, by beating Necaxa 2-1 at home in the final game; and Atlas, under ex-Mexico international Fernando Quirarte, finished with an unbeaten run of 13 matches to top their group.

The relegation battle was fought on three fronts. Puebla's 1-1 draw at home to a disappointing Pachuca, combined with Jaguares' 1-0 home win against Tecos UAG, helped relegate Colibries, who could manage only a 0-0 draw at home to Cruz Azul.

It could be argued that justice prevailed, since Colibries had been accepted into the top division despite failing to comply with the federation's own rules on facilities and economic guarantees. The Cuernavaca club have legal and financial problems, and may be prevented from playing in the Second Division next season unless they resolve them.

National coach Ricardo Lavolpe is still in search of a regular scorer, with Mexico having played out two goalless draws in recent weeks – against Brazil in Guadalajara, and the United States in Houston. The Brazilians were booed since some of their star Europe-based players appeared to be treating the occasion as a vacation.

Carlos Ramirez

Much Adu about Freddy

The 13-year-old American prodigy packs them in at a sun-kissed tournament. Paul Gardner reports

DALLAS CUP

Justifying the hype...Freddy Adu (left)

THINGS got off to a shaky start at the 2003 Dallas Cup. On the morning of the opening day, it was noticed that something was missing on the stadium pitch: a halfway line. The game was played anyway (despite rumbling protests from the FIFA referee), and the problem was fixed the following day.

After that embarrassment, all was joy and light. Especially light – a week of uninterrupted sunshine, virtually unheard of in the 24-year history of the tournament, which features youth teams from around the world.

The overall standard of play was probably a bit lower than in past tournaments, but there were reasons for that. In particular, a tightening of visa regulations by the US government caused seven late cancellations by foreign teams, including Under-19 Super Group entries from Cameroon and Brazil.

Yet the weakening of the foreign presence gave the final results a pleasing equality: three titles to American teams, and three to foreign teams. For the second time in three years, the showcase Super Group went to Mexico, won by Tigres from Monterrey, who proved too knowing and skilful for their younger Final opponents, the USA national Under-17 team.

But it was the Americans who proved the tournament's biggest attraction. Put that down to their 13-year-old phenomenon, Freddy Adu, turning out for the Under-17 national side. The Ghana-born player was a magnet for the media, and proved that all the hype is justified. In every game, his speed and close control caused problems for defenders, who twice conceded penalties in trying to stop him.

"That team, and especially Freddy, were a big help to us," said Gordon Jago, after his first year as tournament director. "We broke attendance records every time."

The success of the Americans caused one major disappointment. No television coverage of the Final because of a clash between the main tournament sponsor, Diadora, and Nike, the sponsor of all the USA's national teams.

Jago, set to enter a relaxed retirement after a lifetime of playing (12 years with Charlton Athletic) and managing (in both England and the USA, outdoors and indoors), took over the Dallas Cup a year ago at its lowest point. The 2002 edition faced cancellation when sponsors and money had dried up.

"The challenge was there," said Jago. "I knew I didn't want a nine-to-five, five-days-a-week type job. What I got was a nine-to-nine, seven-days-a-week job! I put in more hours than I've done for a long, long while.

"What makes the tournament possible are the 1,200 volunteers and their 34 committees; just getting to know the people and how they all functioned was the first step. It meant evening work, because these are people with full-time day jobs.

"To me, the Dallas Cup has always been a class act. If you want to be the best, you've got to play against the best. The best American teams come when they know top foreign teams are here. That's my job, to get the best. We're already talking to top teams in Germany, Italy, Spain and Brazil for next year."

The tournament, a non-profit organisation, works on a budget of around £450,000, and comes up with a balance in the low six-figure range – money that is already in use for what may be the most special Dallas Cup of all. Next year marks the tournament's 25th anniversary.

"We want to do special things for that," says Jago. "We're trying to bring back some of the big teams from the past – like Real Madrid, AC Milan, Corinthians, Celtic and Spurs. So we've added another committee to work on this; maybe we'll have a special logo, and a pre-tournament banquet is under discussion..."

DALLAS CUP XXIV – FINAL RESULTS

UNDER-12
LD Alajuelense (Costa Rica) **3**
Andromeda (USA) **3**
*Alajuelense **4-2** on pens*

UNDER-14
Arsenal FC (USA) **0**
Solar SC (USA) **0**
*Arsenal **4-3** on pens*

UNDER-16
CD Guadalajara (Mexico) **2**
Arsenal FC (USA) **1**

UNDER-17
Dallas Texans Red (USA) **4**
Reston FC (USA) **1**

UNDER-19
Dallas Texans Red (USA) **1**
Comets Red (USA) **0**

UNDER-19 SUPER GROUP
Tigres (Mexico) **2**
U-17 National Team (USA) **1**

Talented Tigres...the Mexican team (in yellow) saw off the USA Under-17s

Solid last line...Tim Howard has helped to tighten up the MetroStars' leaky defence

MetroStars shine at last

Paul Gardner on the surprisingly good form of MLS's long-time lesser lights

UNITED STATES

TOPSY-TURVY is the best way to describe the MLS standings seven weeks into the season. Four of the 10 teams were without a win, including Los Angeles Galaxy, last year's champions. Galaxy, along with Colorado Rapids, Dallas Burn and DC United, had played a total of 25 games and come up with a combined total of only eight points and 17 goals.

The almost total collapse of 40 per cent of the League's teams naturally meant good times for the others. While Los Angeles *et al* languished, the New York/New Jersey MetroStars basked in the unexpected glory of topping the Eastern Conference table and having the highest points tally in either of the two five-team pools.

Whether that means MetroStars, under new coach Bob Bradley, have become a force to be reckoned with is not clear. The schedule has been kind to them, giving four consecutive games against winless clubs, a sequence that enabled them to equal the club record of five straight wins.

But their form has undoubtedly improved, the key to which has been the strengthening of the defence. It is not as easy to score goals against MetroStars as it used to be, thanks mainly to the arrival of US national team centre-back Eddie Pope. Tim Howard has always been a reliable goalkeeper – so much so that rumours of his departure to Manchester United swirl with increasing strength. While the MLS keeper of the season in 2001 and 2002 professed irritation at the rumours – "I'm not involved in any of this, and I don't want to comment; it's a distraction to the team" – MetroStars' general manager Nick Sakiewicz confirmed United had shown an interest.

Similar rumours made the rounds last season concerning forward Clint Mathis. He was said to be on his way to Bayern Munich, or to Parma. And, suddenly, Mathis completely lost his form and was publicly criticised by then MetroStars coach Octavio Zambrano. National team coach Bruce Arena also let his displeasure with the striker be known by failing to give him a regular starting slot at the World Cup. However, Bradley has shown his confidence in Mathis, making him captain, and the forward's value to MetroStars is indicated by the fact that the team have never lost a match when Mathis has scored, a record that covers 23 games.

Piling up the points while they can is exactly what the MetroStars need to be doing because things will get a lot tougher in June. That's when Arena will be calling up players for the Confederations Cup, and for the CONCACAF Gold Cup, which follows it. Howard, Pope and Mathis are all obvious national team choices, and could be absent for as long as two months.

There is also the possibility that MetroStars could lose midfielder Amado Guevara if he is selected by Honduras to play in the Gold Cup. At the moment, Guevara – who is the Honduran captain – is suspended by his federation for refusing to play in a recent international after his complaints about remuneration fell on deaf ears.

New England Revolution, lying second in the Eastern Conference, and the top two in the Western – San Jose Earthquakes and Kansas City Wizards – will not be hit nearly as hard as the MetroStars by national team call-ups. But Los Angeles Galaxy could lose as many as four key players: Danny Califf and Cobi Jones (USA), along with Tyrone Marshall (Jamaica) and last year's League top scorer Carlos Ruiz (Guatemala). This casts an even gloomier light on Galaxy's poor start to the season.

But the club can look forward to help, starting in June. A huge part of Galaxy's woes can be put down to having to play their first eight games on the road because they have no home stadium. "It's frustrating," coach Sigi Schmid admitted. "We would like to have some wins at this stage, but we don't. Eight games on the road has been hard."

The situation will be dramatically corrected on June 7, the date of the ceremonial opening of Galaxy's spanking new permanent home: a £95million, 27,000-capacity stadium in the LA suburb of Carson Hills. The soccer-specific arena is part of a complex that includes six other soccer pitches and has been designated the official training centre for all United States national teams. The money behind the stadium comes, inevitably, from Phil Anschutz and his AEG group, which owns and operates six of the 10 MLS teams. For many critics that is five too many, but the fact is that without Anschutz there would be no MLS.

Money would hardly appear to be a problem for Anschutz. In May he settled a lawsuit by simply agreeing to pay a settlement figure of £2.9m. The case was brought by the New York State attorney general, accusing Anschutz and his telecommunications company Qwest of illegal share trading. Despite the payment, an Anschutz spokesman claimed that: "We have stated there was no wrongdoing here, and we believe that this settlement very clearly reflects that."

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Lemerre awakes from Senegal nightmare

Mark Gleeson on happier days for the former France coach

LESS than a year after France's catastrophe in South Korea, the two men who took the country to the World Cup went head to head against each other in Africa.

Roger Lemerre, now coach of Tunisia, oversaw a 1-0 victory over Senegal, led by his former assistant Guy Stephan, in a friendly in Tunis at the end of April. The win offered Lemerre some measure of revenge for France's 1-0 defeat by Senegal in the World Cup's opening game, a result that contributed to his eventual downfall.

The former France coach has now gone five games unbeaten since taking over Tunisia in October, posting three wins (including one over Sweden) and two draws as he prepares the side for their hosting of the African Nations Cup finals next January.

Things have not been as rosy for Stephan. He has stepped into the rather large shoes of compatriot Bruno Metsu in charge of Senegal, who have something of a post-World Cup hangover after reaching the quarter-finals. Stephan took over in January and the West Africans have yet to score in the three games under his tutelage.

The Senegalese were not too bothered about the symbolism of playing again against Lemerre. "This is a friendly match, not a gala against Lemerre. The players didn't even discuss it among themselves," said Rennes full-back Lamine Diatta.

But the two coaches did talk on the phone before the game and there was a genial greeting before and after the match at Tunis's impressive new Rades stadium, which is to stage next year's Nations Cup Final.

Unbeaten run...Lemerre has yet to taste defeat as Tunisia coach

Bumpy ride...the Yaounde pitch was appalling for last year's CAF Cup Final

CAF to clamp down on inadequate grounds

THE Confederation of African Football is threatening to ban clubs from staging certain games at their home stadium if their pitches fail to pass muster. From July, CAF will be inspecting venues across the continent and will implement their threat, applicable to competitions such as the African Champions League, if a club's facilities are not up to scratch.

The condition of pitches has declined in recent years in many African countries, where facilities are almost exclusively state-run. Last year African soccer suffered the embarrassment of seeing the second leg of the CAF Cup Final played on a horrendously bumpy surface in Yaounde, Cameroon. Meanwhile, a stadium in Lubumbashi in DR Congo that hosted three African Champions League matches would barely have been acceptable for a Sunday kickabout in Europe.

As CAF seeks to increase the commercial viability of its competitions, they have finally begun to clamp down on poorly-kept stadiums and facilities. All this season's African Champions League quarter-finalists will have their grounds inspected after the completion of the preliminary rounds. If they are deemed unsatisfactory, the club will lose home advantage. The same conditions will apply in the African Cup-winners Cup and CAF Cup.

African football is usually equated with flair and skill but it has become an increasingly boorish spectacle over the years. The poor pitches leave little opportunity for players to keep the ball on the ground and practice dribbling skills. Instead, football has become a brute physical game where players are selected for their physical prowess rather than footballing acumen.

Mark Gleeson

OBITUARY

SEKOU TOURE, the top scorer in the French First Division for Montpellier in 1961-62, has died in his native Ivory Coast aged 69. Toure played for Africa Sports and ASEC Abidjan before moving to France, where his other clubs were Grenoble, Nice, Nimes and Beziers.

Pro-file Eric Djemba

Indomitable Lions midfielder proving a tiger for Nantes

ALEX FERGUSON has crossed the Channel to see him in action, and the French reckon he could be playing in Spain, Italy or England come the start of the new season.

Cameroonian international Eric Djemba is the latest up and coming talent in *le championnat* to be linked with a big move in the summer, with Valencia and Juventus also said to be as intrigued as Manchester United's Sir Alex.

A tigerish defensive midfielder, he has not had much international exposure but has been a regular over the season for Nantes. He has looked a cut above the average in only his second campaign in top-flight football.

Djemba (or Djemba Djemba to give him his full traditional surname) only made his bow for Nantes in September 2001, yet less than two years later could be on his way to Old Trafford.

He could have played first-team football even earlier, having been drafted into Nantes' first-team squad in December 2000 at the age of 19, but the quota on foreigners meant he did not play a part in their championship-winning side of that season.

Just four days after his debut, however, he was in UEFA Champions League action at the Olympic stadium in Rome against Lazio. A month later he was stifling the likes of Gaizka Mendieta and Stefano Fiore as Nantes beat the Serie A side at home to top their opening round group.

Djemba, deceptively strong for his frame, is now valued at £4.5million, a potentially massive windfall for Nantes, who have him under contract until June 2007.

The Cameroonian is certain to be among the players who receive special attention from those managers, coaches and scouts who go to the Confederations Cup in France.

Winfried Schafer gave him a first cap just before the African Nations Cup finals in Mali last year, and the midfielder played in two of the games during the tournament as Cameroon marched on to eventual triumph. Djemba also went to the World Cup last year but did not play. He is likely, however, to get a starting berth at the Confederations Cup, where Brazil, Turkey and the United States provide the opposition.

The 22-year-old came up through Nantes' renowned youth scheme, which has been the cornerstone of the club's financial prosperity over the past decade. He had arrived in France from the Kadji academy in Cameroon, where international team-mate Samuel Eto'o, now at Mallorca, also played in his formative years.

From Douala to the top European stage in a leap, and there is certainly much more to come from Djemba.

Mark Gleeson

Fact file

Club Nantes (Fra)
Country Cameroon
Born May 4, 1981, in Douala
International debut January 2002, v Tunisia
International caps 9 (0 goals)
Honours African Nations Cup 2002

Yes, it's Ono

...but why have we waited so long to find out, asks Michael Church

Recognition...Japan's Shinji Ono took the 2002 Asian Player of the Year award

AFC AWARDS

IT MAY be the middle of 2003 but the Asian Football Confederation has only just managed to name its Player of the Year for 2002.

Almost six months after the end of a year in which Asian football was thrust into the limelight like never before, the confederation named Japan's Shinji Ono as the continent's number one. Yet the question that begs to be asked is: why did it take the AFC so long to make the announcement?

Ono has received the award for his achievements for the calendar year of 2002 – a 12-month period during which he became only the second Asian player to win a European club trophy (the UEFA Cup with Feyenoord) and played for Japan as the nation reached the second round of the World Cup finals. But that was a whole year before the award was handed out, ahead of Feyenoord's friendly against Ono's former club Urawa Reds in Saitama stadium in early June.

Since the World Cup, Ono has suffered a minor loss of form, with tiredness robbing him of his effectiveness for Feyenoord after last season's good displays in the Dutch League. This has prompted some pundits to question the midfielder's right to the award.

Ono claimed the gong ahead of South Korea's hair-flicking pretty boy Ahn Jung-hwan – nominated after his winner against Italy in the World Cup second round – Fulham's Japanese international Junichi Inamoto, and China's Li Tie, who impressed for Everton in the Premier League.

The Koreans were belatedly rewarded for their historic showing at the World Cup, when they became the first Asian nation to reach the semi-finals. Dutchman Guus Hiddink was named Coach of the Year, ahead of former Japan boss Philippe Troussier, who won the award in 2000, and the Korean World Cup squad was named Team of the Year. Meanwhile, Lee Chun-soo, the K-League's Rookie of the Year last season and a member of Hiddink's World Cup squad, picked up the Young Player of the Year Award, a trophy won by Ono back in 1998.

IRAQ

Play resumes after the war

WITH the war over, the brutal regime of Saddam Hussein confined to the scrapheap and the rebuilding of a nation starting to take place, Iraq has also moved a step closer to returning to the football mainstream.

An interim committee has been set up, headed by former national team player Hussein Said, and the Iraqis have voiced their desire to return to the international fray as soon as possible. A friendly against the United States has already been mooted, while national coach Bernd Stange has returned to Iraq having left before the invasion by British and American troops. Olympic team boss Adnan Hamd has kick-started his side's preparations for the qualifiers for next year's Games, and professional football has resumed, with a friendly between the Al Zawraa and Police clubs.

While the Iraqis had been playing competitively at all levels following the lifting of their ban imposed in the wake of the invasion of Kuwait in 1990, the eradication of Saddam will finally bring to an end one of the most problematic scenarios in Asian football. Ever since the end of the first Gulf War, Kuwait have refused to face Iraq in any sport.

This often presented a major dilemma to the AFC, since the Kuwaitis' stance caused disruption to the confederation's tournaments. The two nations had to be kept apart in draws, a condition insisted upon by the Kuwaitis until prisoners of war taken during the occupation were returned home. That never happened.

Iraq was one of the most powerful nations in Asian football during the Saddam regime, even after UN sanctions imposed after the first Gulf War crippled the nation. The national team won the Gulf Cup three times – in 1979, 1984 and 1988 – before being expelled from the Gulf Co-operation Council in 1991. Iraq's highest point came in 1986 when they reached the World Cup finals in Mexico. They also reached the quarter-finals of the Asian Cup in both 1996 and 2000 and only narrowly missed out on qualifying for the finals of the 1996 Atlanta Olympics. They also won the West Asian Football Federation Championship in Syria in 2002.

All those achievements, though, were clouded by allegations of abuse by Saddam's son, Uday, who headed both the Iraq Olympic Council and Football Association. Stories filtered out that the national team's failure to reach the final qualifying stage for the 1998 World Cup led to players being beaten on the soles of their feet as well as having their heads and beards shaved off as punishment.

Stirred into action, FIFA sent a delegation to Baghdad to investigate. Not surprisingly, though, no evidence was found to support the claims. Now, though, with the destruction of Saddam's oppressive regime, the truth is beginning to emerge.

"Of course, we are happy the war is finished in Iraq and now the reconstruction of the country is about to begin," says AFC general secretary Peter Velappan. "Iraq is a very passionate football country and we have established daily contact with Baghdad. As soon as there is order and peace in Iraq, FIFA and the AFC will send a delegation to help them set up a new federation and look at reconstruction programmes for the game there.

"We will also offer to bring players out of Iraq, provide training facilities in Jordan and Dubai, and do everything we can to help the Iraqis get back on their feet."

Michael Church

Policeman's ball...Al Zawraa take on Police as football returns to Iraq

JAPAN

JEF mount challenge

JEF UNITED ICHIHARA are mounting a concerted title challenge in the J.League First Stage, lying a point behind leaders Jubilo Iwata after 10 of the 15 matches. They have also been scoring freely, with South Korean striker Choi Yong-soo having hit nine of their 23 goals to go to the top of the national scoring chart.

Wins over two other title rivals – Yokohama F Marinos (3-1) and Kashima Antlers (2-0) – have confirmed JEF's championship credentials under new coach Ivica Osim. But Osim warned against over-confidence after the Antlers game, saying: "We beat a better team than ourselves. I want my team to play like Antlers. We were just luckier today."

The defeat by JEF was Antlers' third League game without a win, leaving Brazilian coach Toninho Cerezo threatening to quit over what he describes as "locker-room problems". Cerezo said: "Too many players are playing for themselves and not for the team, and this is now affecting results. I feel isolated as a manager, and as a foreigner. If the problems in the team don't improve, then I'll leave."

It is all a far cry from the start of the season, when Antlers won the inaugural East Asian Club Championship in impressive style.

Mike Plastow & Michi Ishijima

Round-up

Staying on...Bruno Metsu has a new deal with Al Ain

ASIA

BRUNO METSU has signed a new one-year contract at **UNITED ARAB EMIRATES** side Al Ain having guided them to the League title in his first season in charge as well as to the semi-finals of the Asian Champions League. Al Ain lead Dalian Shide of China 4-2 after the first leg of the latter competition; the return, in China, has been postponed until August due to the SARS outbreak.

Defending champions Songnam Ilhwa continue to lead the way in **SOUTH KOREA**, lying five points clear of nearest rivals Chonbuk.

Sepahan won the **IRANIAN** League title for the first time, finishing well clear of second-placed Pirouzi.

Ruwi pipped Dohfar to win the **OMAN** League and claim a place in next season's Asian Champions League. Al Sadd will represent **QATAR** in the competition after clinching their domestic title. Al Sadd have already started their preparations by signing French World Cup winner Frank Leboeuf. The former Chelsea and Marseille defender is one of several big-name moves to the Gulf state, following Mario Basler and Stefan Effenberg.

Effenberg joined Al Arabi in a one-year deal reported to be worth around £1.5million.

Krung Thai Bank lifted the League title in **THAILAND**, pipping champions BEC Tero Sasana, finalists in this year's Champions League, on the final day of the season.

MALAYSIA have qualified for the final phase of Asia's Olympic qualifying tournament without kicking a ball. The Malaysians were given a walkover win after Turkmenistan refused to travel to Kuala Lumpur as a result of the SARS scare. The competition, originally scheduled for September and October, has been postponed until March 2004.

Perlis reached the Malaysian FA Cup Final, beating Sarawak 5-3 on aggregate in the semi-finals. The second leg of the other semi, between Sabah and Negri Sembilan, was abandoned following a pitch invasion. Negri were leading 1-0 on the night and 2-0 on aggregate.

SAUDI ARABIA'S Al Hilal have released former Manchester United winger Andrei Kanchelskis and Cameroon's Patrick Suffo after failing to qualify for the knockout stages of the championship. Jeddah clubs Al Ittihad and Al Ahli took the top two positions and are joined in the final four by Al Qadisiya and Al Nasr.

East Bengal thrashed Vasco Sports Club 4-0 to clinch their seventh **INDIAN** national League title and complete an unprecedented clean sweep of the country's five major tournaments (the others are the IFA League, IFA Shield, Durand Cup and Independence Cup).

Salgaocar beat the champions on the final day to take second place, while Churchill Brothers' Ghanaian striker Yusif Yakubu finished League top scorer for the second season running, his tally this term 21 goals.

India striker Bhaichung Bhutia has been linked with a move to Greek side Panionios.

Michael Church, Azam Mahmood & G C Das

OCEANIA

MIRAMAR RANGERS topped the regular season table in **NEW ZEALAND** to gain an advantageous route through the title play-offs after a dramatic loss of form by previous leaders Central United. Central lost six of their last seven games, and though still qualifying by finishing third would now reach the Grand Final only by going the hard way.

East Auckland, second, and Napier City Rovers, fourth, were the other play-off qualifiers.

Pirae saw off the title challenge of Manu Ura in **TAHITI**, beating their closest rivals 3-1 in the third from final round.

In **FIJI**, Lautoka claimed top spot in the League by defeating the previously unbeaten Olympic selection 2-1. However, rivals Rewa, the Olympians and Ba have games in hand.

Magenta ended AS Monte Dore's dream of retaining the **NEW CALEDONIAN** title by knocking them out at the semi-final stage of the title play-offs. Magenta's 3-1 aggregate win set up a Grand Final meeting with 2001 champions JS Baco, who overcame AS Traput. Magenta and Baco are also to contest the FA Cup Final.

In the **SOLOMON ISLANDS**, play has resumed in the 2002 Honiara Premier League after it was halted last November due to civil unrest.

Paul Moon

Ultra abuse...sections of the Real Madrid crowd are openly racist

Racism - a Real problem

I recently travelled from the UK to watch the Real Madrid v Borussia Dortmund match in the Champions League with my wife, who is mixed race. The expected enjoyment of watching players of the calibre of Zidane, Raul and Koller was replaced by shock and distress due to the behaviour of Real's 'Ultra Sur' fans.

The 'monkey' noises and other abuse directed towards Dortmund's ethnic-minority players was disgusting, but the worst moment was when Brazilian Evanilson was booked in front of the Ultra Sur section. Fans rushed to the front to give the Nazi salute in celebration. Why should a player have to put up with such abuse? Why should normal fans have to share a stadium with these thugs? Why should people like my wife be intimidated by racists if they wish to watch top-quality football?

It is hardly surprising that eastern European clubs show little interest in preventing racism since little is shown by the FIFA team of the century, in the world's most popular club competition. Where were the anti-racist messages over the tannoy that I see at every English Third Division game?

UEFA has the power, and duty, to make a difference. Not a few thousand euros fine but docking points in the Champions League. If nothing improves then a year ban from European competition should turn tackling racism into a priority at the Bernabeu.

Rob Tanner, by e-mail

Gavin Hamilton replies: UEFA, to be fair, have been trying to tackle the problem. Ultimately, however, fining clubs and federations is not tackling the root cause. You've highlighted the biggest problem that UEFA faces: banning the likes of Real Madrid from European competition would send out a powerful message, but it is just not going to happen. Madrid, with all their stars, are the biggest draw. UEFA cannot afford to lose them.

We will pass your letter on to UEFA for comment. Racism in European football is an issue that, unfortunately, we will return to in the coming months.

Please mark your correspondence 'Letters page' and send to:
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ACROSS

7 Liechtenstein coach since 1998 (5)
8 Experienced Italian forward in the Borussia Dortmund squad (5)
9 27-year-old ex-Verona midfielder now at Milan (7)
10 Former Palmeiras and Brazil left-back with Santos (3)
11 Keeper transferred last year from Werder Bremen to Schalke (4)
13 Real Madrid's No 7 (4)
17 Club Brugge and Slovenia midfielder previously at Grazer AK (3)
18 Much-travelled Brazilian midfielder currently at Nice (7)
20 Irish striker whose club sides have included Inter, Leeds and Spurs (5)
21 Congo-born ex-Club Brugge defender at Kaiserslautern (5)

DOWN

1 Corinthians and Brazil full-back (6)
2 Nigerian centre-back whose clubs have included Standard Liege, Marseille and Everton (4)
3 Forward who moved from Kaiserslautern to Koln in 2001 (5)
4 Serb midfielder loaned last season by Juve to Basle (5)
5 Argentina's national coach (6)
6 Auxerre attacking midfielder given his France debut in 2002 (4)
12 Schalke's coach (6)
14 Saprissa goalkeeper who skippered Costa Rica's 2002 World Cup side (6)
15 Outstanding young French defender nurtured by Guy Roux (5)
16 US international keeper in Gansler's Kansas City side (5)
17 Moscow club last crowned (Soviet) champions in 1991 (4)
19 Norway's national coach (4)

MAY SOLUTION

Across: 2 Maldonado, 6 Thiam, 7 Demol, 9 Emelec, 10 Cris, 12 Dani, 14 Sikora, 17 Rossi, 18 Speed, 19 Joao Pinto.
Down: 1 Metzelder, 2 Maine, 3 Lommel, 4 Oddo, 5 Aimar, 8 Laslandes, 11 Wilson, 13 Nesta, 15 Otero, 16 Diop.

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Brian Glanville's LAST WORD

Coleman the best choice for Fulham

ALL credit to Fulham for making Chris Coleman, at 32, their new manager. It seemed the remotest of possibilities when he took over on a plainly temporary basis from Jean Tigana, who was treated crudely, unfairly and, potentially, suicidally. It was quite on the cards that Fulham, having lost two important games when Tigana knew he was on borrowed time, would continue to fail and even drift out of the Premiership.

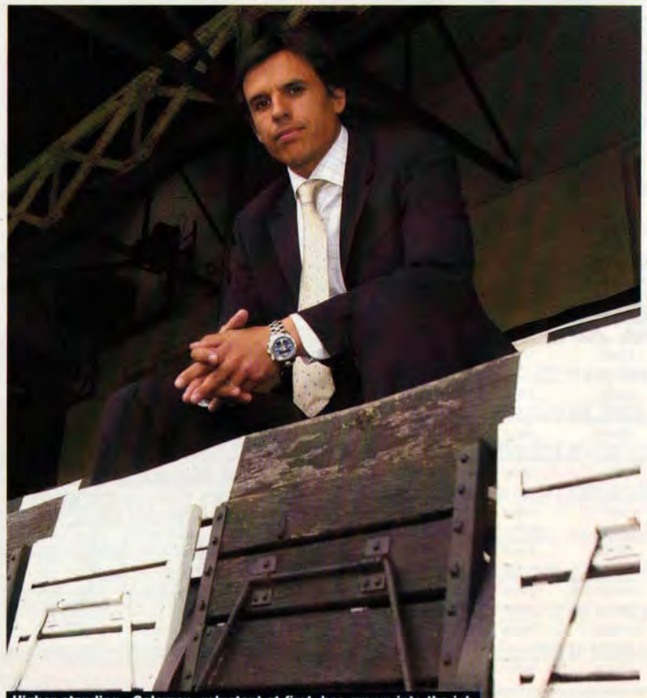
Coleman insisted that he was far too young and inexperienced to continue on a permanent basis, but the better the results, the more he felt he wanted the job, and the clearer it grew that he could do it.

Rumours that Mohamed Fayed, the owner – now a tax exile – wanted the likes of Klaus Toppmoller or the dour Louis Van Gaal were somewhat alarming. What prospect was there that either of them could establish the manifest rapport which Coleman, who had tightened up the tactics by employing a 3-5-2 formation, had with his players? Foreigners both, not only would it have taken time for them to settle down, but also they might well have lost the large French contingent, loyal to Tigana and, as it subsequently grew clear, sympathetic to Coleman.

I still think Fulham have a difficult future. I don't see how Fayed can stay indefinitely after seeing so relatively low a return on the £100million he has splashed out, and the prospect of a probable return to a diminished Craven Cottage, with a 17,000 capacity, which simply couldn't generate the money that a Premiership team needs. The £43m Tigana spent on transfers has hardly brought success.

Fayed loved his popularity at the Cottage, where he did his baseball-capped laps of honour. But with such kudos in short supply this season, where is the incentive to stay?

'What prospect was there that either Toppmoller or Van Gaal could establish the rapport Coleman had with his players?'



Higher standing...Coleman, reluctant at first, has grown into the job

Faces of defeat...Marsden and Strachan

Wily Strachan veils shortcomings

THIS year's FA Cup Final was dreary but you had to admire Gordon Strachan's crafty take on it in his post-match press conference. The Southampton manager eulogised as almost irresistible an Arsenal team that had often looked mediocre and that, by the admission of their own manager, Arsene Wenger, had actually been on the back foot in the second half. (I wasn't quite so sure.)

But in praising the Gunners, who would surely have skated it had Sol Campbell and the dynamic Patrick Vieira only been available, Strachan was able to cast a veil over his own tactical failings and excessive caution.

Why, one wondered, did he use his injured captain Chris Marsden at all, let alone on the left flank, where he hadn't the pace to worry the potentially vulnerable right flank of Arsenal's defence? Why didn't he use the admittedly rebellious Fabrice Fernandes, who at least has pace, from the beginning?

That Saints could well have saved, even have won, the day was shown in the second half when they so nearly scored twice, once when David Seaman made that fine save from Brett Ormerod's shot – how did the Arsenal defence let him through? – and again when the otherwise dormant James Beattie beat Seaman with his header, only for Ashley Cole to save on the line.

Real – no case for defence

IT IS hard not to rejoice in the European demise of Real Madrid – some proof, one hopes, that even in today's polarised football world, money isn't quite everything.

All those grovellers and sycophants who exulted in Real's Bernabeu win against a cravenly unambitious Manchester United in the Champions League quarter-finals must now think again.

This Real team has manifestly been a case of Emperor's New Clothes, promptly conceding four goals against Real Sociedad in San Sebastian after the home leg against United, another four at Old Trafford and five, incredibly, at home to Real Mallorca.

Nearly £100million was grotesquely splashed out on just three attacking players – Ronaldo, Luis Figo and Zinedine Zidane – behind whom played a defence like a colander.

The right flank just couldn't compete with pace, while Fernando Hierro at centre-back has well and truly passed his meridian.

Don't ask me why Real have neglected their defence. Let's just be glad it happened.

Real struggle...the best days for Hierro (right) are gone

Drop the AC!

ISN'T it time for a moratorium on the bird-brained tendency of TV commentators and analysts to refer to the Milan football club as AC? AC, dear bird-brains, simply stands for Associazione Calcio, which in turn may be translated as Football Club. Would you, then, refer to Arsenal, Chelsea or Everton as FC?

George in his own write

GEORGE COHEN'S autobiography is an enjoyable and honest book, despite the ill-advised first chapter, a rant against the England 2002 World Cup team, included presumably in the erroneous belief that it would make the book more topical.

Later, despite a multitude of misprints, George gets into his stride and shows himself for the downright humorous, hugely likeable and brave human being I have always known him to be. Immensely brave in the way that, over the years, he has fought off cancer.

I am not quite as convinced as he of the stature of Johnny Haynes, who had two unhappy World Cups. And George is discreet about the car crash in the middle of the Blackpool night which all but ended Haynes' career. He was driving, said George, with a "family friend". Well, that was one way of describing the lady.

Breaking through...Obafemi Martins takes on the Milan defence

Martins – Recoba Mark II?

WHAT will be the future of Internazionale's exciting 18-year-old Nigerian striker, Obafemi Akin Wunmi Martins, scorer of that thrilling goal against Milan at San Siro in the Champions League semi-finals?

Martins started this season merely as a name on Inter's youth team list. But the club's Argentinian manager, Hector Cuper, had the courage and enterprise to put him on against Bayer Leverkusen in Germany earlier in the competition, when he promptly scored.

Next season, however, Martins will presumably have to contest a place with Bobo Vieri, Hernan Crespo, Alvaro Recoba and Mohamed Kallon.

Uruguayan Recoba knows all about that. You may remember his sensational debut for Inter on the first day of the 1997-98 season, at home to Brescia. Dario Hubner had put the modest visitors two goals ahead when Recoba came on and scored two sensational goals, one from a free-kick, to equalise. His reward was to be dropped to the bench and eventually to be loaned to Venezia – for whom, with splendid irony, he scored twice against Inter.

Wot, no Cole or Barry?

SVEN GORAN ERIKSSON has his own somewhat perverse way of doing things. It passed belief that in that huge Usual Suspects squad for the superfluous (Homage to Mandela) South Africa friendly and the rest he should have omitted two of the best young players in the country.

Joe Cole and Gareth Barry were left out (though both were subsequently called up as late replacements) while berths were given to such as Owen Hargreaves, who has lost his first-team place at Bayern Munich and even been rebuked by his manager, Ottmar Hitzfeld.

Cole may have seriously lost his rag at Bolton in a League game but he remains one of the few really promising and gifted playmaking English midfielders of his disappointing generation. Meanwhile, at a time when gifted English left-footers are in such short supply, how could a player such as Barry, who has had such an excellent year with Aston Villa, be initially omitted? He can operate either as a left-back – in which role England regular Wayne Bridge looked a forlorn figure for Southampton in the FA Cup Final – or at left midfield.

Hard to know how Eriksson's mind works.

July 1963

MILAN, celebrating a first European Cup for Italy after beating Benfica 2-1 in the Final at Wembley, were the talk if not the toast of Europe 40 years ago.

In his match report, Eric Batty commented that Benfica had lost the game rather than Milan winning because of an injury to Mario Coluna. The Portuguese had taken an early lead through Eusebio but lost Coluna for much of the second half after he was "chopped" by Gino Pivatelli. "Coluna was the best player on view, he was the inspiration of the Portuguese and when he went, their hopes of a three-year reign at the top went with him."

It had not been one of the great Finals. "Real Madrid of 1960 would have beaten either team with ease."

Batty also noted that the 45,000 attendance was the same as for the Amateur Cup Final, played in the same stadium earlier in the month. This, he said, "merely served to underline the apathy held in England for matches of this calibre in which 'foreigners' are concerned!"

Still on the matter of the European Cup Final, Roger Macdonald paid tribute to Jose Altafini, scorer of both of Milan's goals against Benfica, in a feature on the competition's all-time leading goalscorers.

Altafini's "remarkable feat" was to have scored 14 goals in that season's European Cup campaign. His tally, beating Ferenc Puskas's record of 12, took him to fifth place in the list. In first place was Alfredo Di Stefano, scorer of 44 goals for Real Madrid.

Elsewhere in the issue, Brian Glanville argued that Madrid were the only outstanding club side of the past 15 years, and that their greatness was all down to Di Stefano.

"The more one has to do with football, the more does it seem that individuals, happening to occur together at a certain period, make for great teams, while systems are quite secondary," Glanville wrote.

"After all, where would Real Madrid have ever been without Di Stefano?"

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COLUNA MISHAP WAS THE END OF IBERIAN HOPES

EUROPEAN CUP FINAL REPORT by ERIC BATTY

TWENTY-TWO

THREE OUTSTANDING SIDES HAVE BEEN SEEN IN THE PAST FIFTEEN YEARS

GREAT INDIVIDUALS MAKE FOR GREAT TEAMS

BRIAN GLANVILLE draws the conclusion from his findings

Soccer Outfits

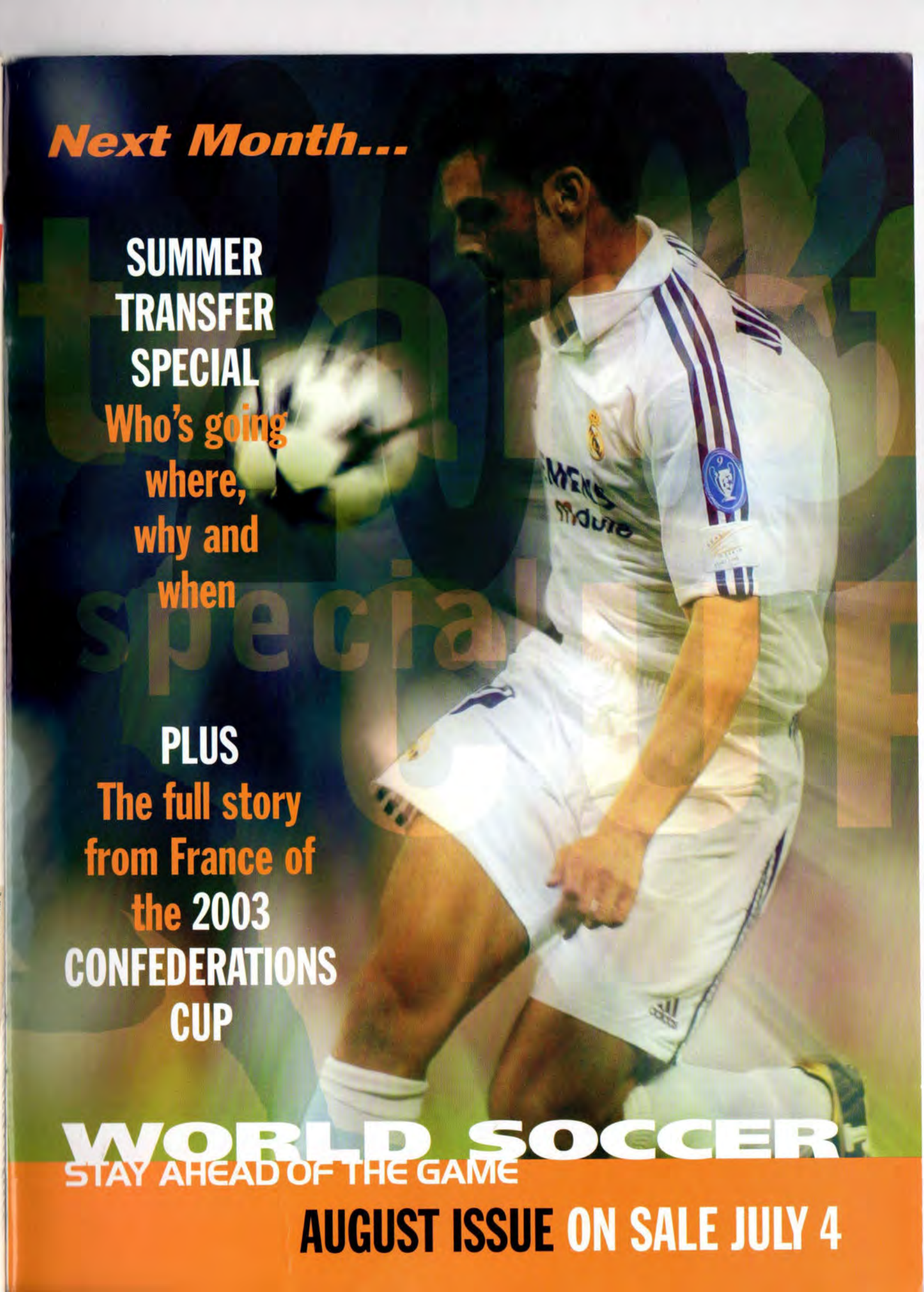
are CONSISTENTLY good

BENEATH THE MOB — A SCORER

OF DI STEFANO IT WAS ONCE SAID: "IS THIS MAN A GOD?"

MEN & MARKSMANSHIP IN THE EUROPEAN CUP

Research by Roger Macdonald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